

SNOHOMISH COUNTY STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN 2010 STP PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORT



Updated February 6, 2017



INTRODUCTION

The 2010 Snohomish County Tourism Strategic Plan (STP) was designed as a roadmap to guide development of the County's tourism industry and assets to reach its full potential. The plan outlined a course of action for five years from 2010 to 2015. Now that the plan's timeframe has passed, Snohomish County is undertaking a plan update to review and refresh its strategic direction for the next five years. This report presents a review of the 2010 Plan to evaluate how well it has served the County in meeting its tourism goals. Such reflection will also help inform the strategic direction of the 2016 Plan update.

This report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1** provides a general overview of the 2010 Plan structure and its key elements, what the plan was aiming to achieve, and how it was going to be implemented. It analyzes the 2010 Plan through a broad, big picture qualitative summary review and also for each of the 26 Strategies, which can be found in the Appendix.
- **Chapter 2** looks at tourism funding over the past years since the plan was adopted and draws comparisons with previous years where this information is available.

1.0 2010 PLAN OVERVIEW

1.1 Methodology

This review is based on qualitative and quantitative information from staff at Snohomish County and the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau who have been leading plan implementation. Methodologies for the plan review included several in-person meetings with key staff from these two organizations, reviewing documents and plan implementation update reports, and analyzing expenditure data provided by staff.

1.2 Key Features

The 2010 Plan was written during challenging economic times in 2009, as the impact of the national economic recession was still being felt locally. The plan considered several key factors in crafting the strategic approach, goals and strategies, including the limited resources available, the size of the County, the diversity of tourism assets and attractions, and current tourism market conditions. The plan incorporated feedback and input from a wide range of stakeholders that was collected throughout the planning process.

Strategic Approach

A tourism strategy established in 2000 set the goal of achieving \$1 billion in annual tourism spending by 2010. With this goal in mind, the strategic approach considered the County's diverse range of tourism assets, from urban destinations to thousands of acres of wilderness. The 2010 Plan set out to strengthen and coordinate these many assets, with the goal of continuing this spending growth. The crux of the strategic approach established in 2010 was organized around the following big idea:

"The foundational direction for the Plan is to focus visitor attention towards "anchor clusters" and "anchor attractions," while working to enhance – and extend – the visitor experience through "sustaining clusters" and "sustaining assets."

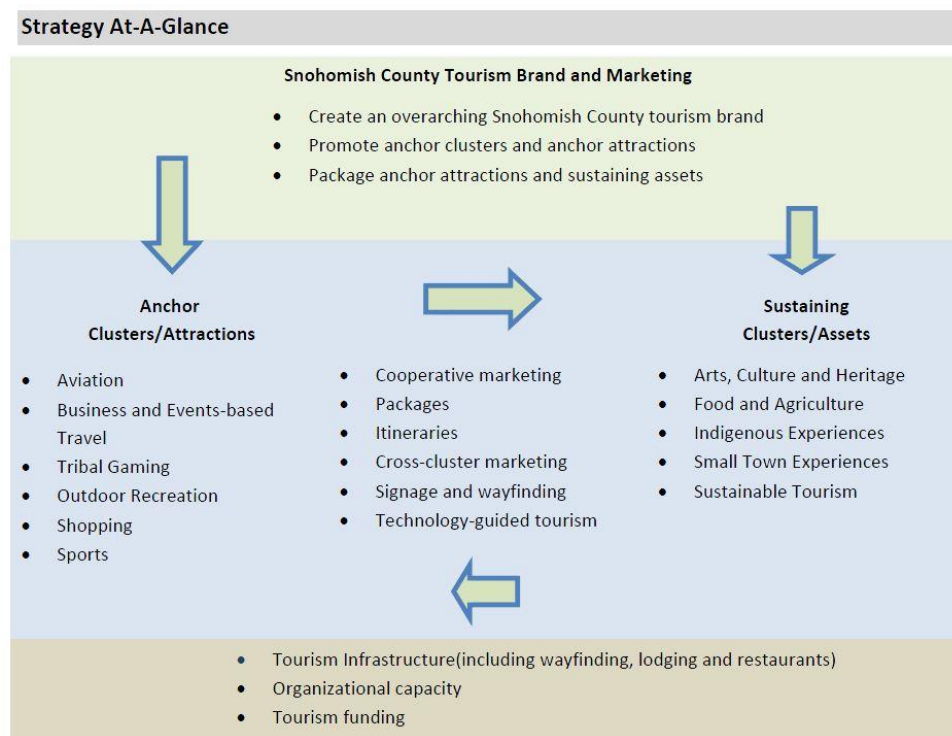
The anchor clusters and attractions are defined as those that are strong enough to attract large numbers of visitors from outside the county and that have built-in marketing infrastructure programs. The anchor clusters identified include aviation, business, events-based travel, tribal gaming, outdoor recreation, shopping, and sports.

Sustaining clusters are defined as those assets and attractions that are compelling reasons for visitors to extend their stay in the county, but currently do not have the attractive power to bring visitors to Snohomish County on their own. Sustaining clusters include the arts, culture, and heritage; food and agriculture; indigenous experiences; and small town experiences.

Hidden assets are a third category of tourism assets that are not as well known as “tourism assets” and are associated with local communities. These could also be seen as new or emerging assets.

The strategic approach emphasized building the county’s tourism brand, promoting anchor clusters and sustaining assets, and strengthening tourism supports, such as building tourism infrastructure, organizational capacity, and funding. See Exhibit 1 for more details on the strategic approach.

Exhibit 1 – 2010 Plan: Strategic Approach



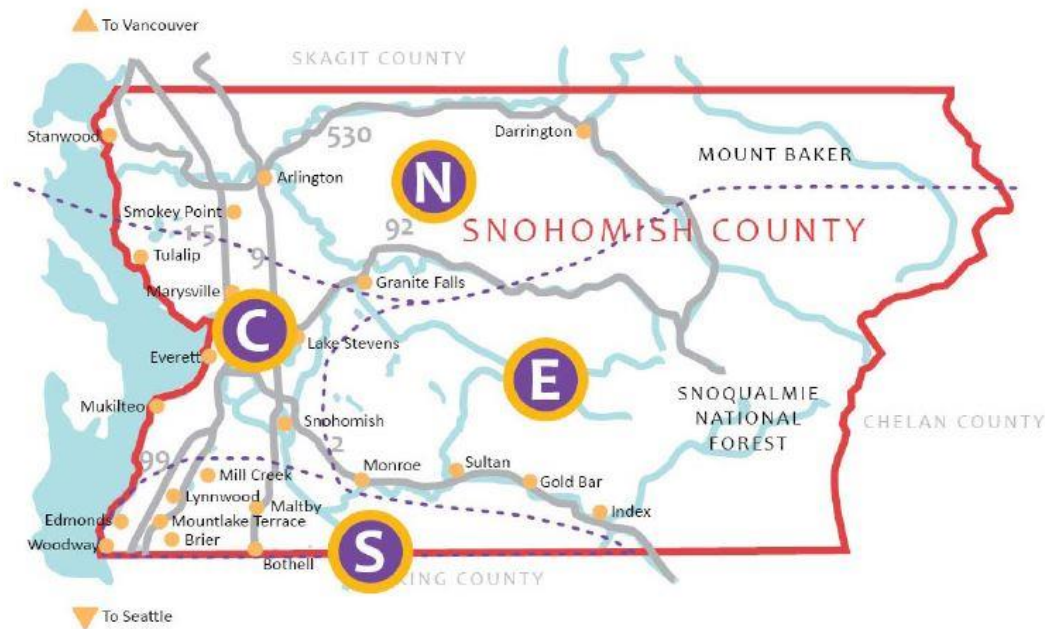
Source: Snohomish County Tourism Plan, 2010.

Tourism Exploration Zones

Another key feature of the 2010 Plan’s strategic approach is the Tourism Exploration Zones. Four zones were created to organize the county’s communities and tourism assets geographically – North, Central, East, and South (see map below in Exhibit 2). The idea behind the Zones was to develop itineraries and promote attractions and assets within a Zone because of their geographic proximity. As Snohomish County is large, the Zones approach would help tourists cut down on travel time and explore more deeply the attractions within the particular Zone they were visiting.

Exhibit 2 – 2010 Plan: Tourism Exploration Zones Map

Tourism Exploration Zones At-A-Glance



TOURISM EXPLORATION ZONES

N North		Arlington, Darrington, Granite Falls, Stanwood
C Central		Everett, Mukilteo, Lake Stevens, Snohomish, Marysville, Tulalip
E East		Monroe, Gold Bar, Sultan, Index
S South		Bothell, Mill Creek, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Edmonds, (Brier, Woodway)

Source: Snohomish County Tourism Plan, 2010.

Goals, Strategies, and Tasks

The 2010 Plan contained six Goals and 26 Strategies that further articulate the strategic approach. Each strategy contains a number of detailed tasks with lead organizations assigned, suggested timelines for completion, and estimated resources needed to complete the task. Exhibit 3 summarizes the plan's goals and strategies, **Section 1.5** provides a summary review of each strategy, and **Appendix A** presents more detail.

Exhibit 3 – 2010 Plan: Overview of Goals and Strategies

Overview of Goals and Strategies
I. Stronger Tourism Brand and Marketing Strategy
1. Repackage the County's brand into an accessible adventure destination.
2. Develop strong cross-promotional marketing to encourage visitors to experience anchor clusters, anchor attractions, sustaining clusters, and sustaining assets.
3. Develop the capacity to better promote hidden assets.
4. Have fun and engage people in surprising ways.
II. Anchor Clusters and Anchor Attractions Focus with Strong Cross-Promotional Efforts
5. Expand the convention and meeting booking function of the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.
6. Strengthen the aviation cluster and knit it to the broader network of tourism assets.
7. Build on the County's strengths in tribal gaming.
8. Leverage the County's considerable outdoor recreation assets.
9. Promote and support the County's diverse shopping options.
10. Continue to build the County's organized sports market.
11. Promote adventure-focused day trip itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions.
12. Promote all itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions within target audience communities.
III. Rich Network of Sustaining Clusters and Sustaining Assets
13. Take a collaborative approach to strengthening the County's sustaining tourism clusters.
14. Identify sustainable tourism opportunities.
IV. Stronger County Tourism Infrastructure
15. Improve the tourism information delivery system.
16. Update the approach to putting information in visitors' hands.
17. Improve wayfinding and support the serendipity of discovery.
18. Improve public transportation options to enhance access to tourism assets.
19. Support the broadening of the County's range of overnight options.
V. Enhanced Organizational Capacity
20. Strengthen the County's ability to coordinate tourism efforts and implement the Plan.
21. Use data to strengthen tourism promotion and development efforts.
22. Broaden and enrich the conversation between the County and stakeholders.
23. Build stronger partnerships with the tribes and encourage indigenous tourism experiences.
24. Support professional development for the County's tourism workforce.
VI. Tourism Funding Resources Align with Strategic Goals
25. Leverage the lodging tax effectively to advance tourism strategies.
26. Support the emerging Tourism Promotion Area.

Source: Snohomish County Tourism Plan, 2010.

1.3 Implementation

Support

The 2010 Plan outlined an implementation approach to meet the strategic goals over the five-year timeline. The 2010 Plan identified the Snohomish County Tourism Division and the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau to lead and monitor implementation. Since that time, the County's Tourism Division has been moved under the Parks and Recreation Department, but this shift did not influence the approach to implementation. The County's role remains focused on service development. The Snohomish County Tourism Bureau is the designated, year-round, tourism and convention marketing and sales organization contracted by Snohomish County to promote the area as a desirable destination for visitors and meeting planners. The Bureau's role can be viewed as covering the public-facing service delivery aspects.

Strategy 20 in the 2010 Plan recommended the addition of a new, full-time tourism position to steward implementation. This role, the Strategic Tourism Coordinator, was not created until 2014. The delay in implementing this role should be considered when assessing the progress and impact of the plan's strategies. Many of the strategies and their subsequent tasks focused on outreach and development could not be started until this position was filled.

Funding Resources

The plan provided estimates for funding resources at the task level that would be necessary to implement each strategy. The 2010 Plan anticipated the Snohomish County Lodging Tax "Large Fund" would be the primary funding source for most of the investments recommended within the plan. The Large Fund has traditionally been a source of funds for investments in capital projects that attract tourists to the county. More details on tourism funding resources can be found in **Chapter 2**.

Tracking and Measuring

The 2010 Plan loosely suggested some tools for measuring success. It mentioned the Dean Runyan calculation of total tourism spending as an aggregate measure to track annual tourism spending. It also suggested several performance measures to track over time, including overnight stays, meetings and events, website visitors, downloaded materials, cross-promotional results, and involved stakeholders. However, it did not provide numeric metrics for these categories, as these were to be developed later by the lead organizations implementing the plan.

1.4 Big Picture Summary Review

In November 2016, BERK Consulting met with several key staff from Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Tourism Division and the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau to solicit feedback on the 2010 Plan – what worked well, and what could use improvement. The following provides a high-level overview of what these staff members thought were the plan's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

- **Variety and specificity.** Staff appreciated the breadth of the plan and the variety of tourism assets addressed. The specificity of the plan at the strategy and task level gave County staff and County council the ability to approve proposed work when it was within the estimated resource expense numbers that the plan indicated was needed to complete it.
- **Including and elevating hidden assets.** Staff liked the strategic approach that called for including and elevating development of hidden assets and connecting them with to anchor clusters and attractions.
- **Supporting data.** The plan provided the data to support actions to move work forward, and it provided guidance and protection to decline other suggestions, as suggested tasks and strategies were already carefully considered to support the plan's goals and strategic approach.
- **Engagement focus.** The engagement component was also seen as highly valuable, with some participants stating the most valuable aspect of the 2010 Plan was that it required members of the county's different tourism sectors and geographies to work together. The plan provided opportunities for small town communities to join the conversation on tourism development through authorized workshops and trainings outlined in the plan's strategies and tasks (see Strategies 13, 22, 23).

Weaknesses

- **Too specific and inflexible.** While the specificity of the plan was helpful in some instances, it was problematic in others. The specific timeline outlined in the plan created inflexibility among decision-makers that took the plan verbatim and not as a structural framework. Some decision-makers felt if they did not follow the plan exactly as written, they would be held accountable.
- **Lack of narrative cohesion.** Staff members felt that the plan lacked a cohesive narrative voice, and that there was inconsistent direction, where some strategies conflicted with others.
- **Not user-friendly.** Staff thought the plan was difficult to report on because it was implemented by two different agencies with different focuses, and that it was not easily accessible or understandable to a broader audience.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Provide more flexibility through a framework.** Staff suggested that the plan update could provide more flexibility through general recommendations with language that it is suggested, but not mandatory. This could also be accomplished by providing a more general framework and less detail in the Goal-Strategy-Task organization employed in the 2010 Plan.
- **Improve Tourism Exploration Zones.** There were some thoughts on improving the Tourism Exploration Zones to break them into regions or potentially overlapping corridors, or based on interests.

1.5 Goal and Strategy Summary Review

The 2010 Plan Strategies were reviewed with input and reflection from the Tourism Bureau and County Parks and Recreation Department. The focus here is to look at how well the strategies, tasks, and planned budget served the County's goals. The summary table presented in Exhibit 4 provides a high-level reflection on the progress of each strategy. Exhibit 5 compares the 2010 planned budget to actual expenditures at the strategy level. These numbers are best estimates, with the goal of understanding to what extent actual expenditures followed the plan's guidance.

Appendix A provides a more in-depth review of each of the 26 strategies, with an update on progress to date, a comparison of planned resources to actual expenditures, and reflections on the impact of the strategy to the county's tourism industry and development with suggestions for how the strategy may be carried forward or modified, which will inform further development of the plan update.

Summary Findings

- Overall, progress has been made on the majority of strategies and their tasks over the past years with ongoing and continuing work.
- One strategy was determined not worthy of advancing (Strategy 4). Although the intent was worthy and important, it was too specific to be its own strategy.
- Only a few strategies and tasks have not been started. Strategy 18 has not been started due to the need for cooperation and interest of actors beyond the means and control of the Tourism Bureau and Snohomish County Tourism Parks and Recreation Department.
- Most strategies were viewed as having a positive impact on tourism development in the county. Only a few strategies (Strategies 4, 13, 14, and 18) were viewed as having a neutral impact.
- It is estimated that 54% of the total planned budget was actually spent to implement the strategies and tasks. The total planned budget to implement the plan from 2011 - 2015 was \$2.2 million. Estimated actual expenditures for 2011 – 2016 was \$1.2 million.

Exhibit 4 – Strategy Review Summary

Legend

Complete	Task was started and completed. No more work is being done on the task.
Ongoing	Task is recurring/ongoing, perhaps completed in years past and continuing.
In progress	Discreet tasks that have been started but are not finished.
Not started	Task not yet started.
Dropped	Task has not been advanced for specific reasons.

Strategy	Status	Reflections on Impact	Summary Progress Notes
Goal 1. Stronger Tourism Brand and Marketing Strategy			
1. Repackage the Snohomish County brand into an accessible adventure destination.	Complete and Ongoing	Positive	Re-branding initiatives completed and had a positive impact overall. Work is ongoing to refine the brand and further market the county as a destination.
2. Develop strong cross - promotional marketing to encourage visitors to experience anchor clusters, anchor attractions, sustaining clusters, and sustaining assets.	Ongoing	Positive	Many accomplishments since 2013 to promote and market anchor and sustaining attraction through trainings, rural tourism workshops, mobile tours, collateral, and website improvements. There is a desire to revise the zone structure and tactics with a focus on regional networks.
3. Develop the capacity to better promote hidden assets.	Ongoing	Neutral/ Positive	Also addressed through Strategy 2. Accomplishments include mobile tours, website enhancements, tourism maps, promotion collateral and sub-branding of river towns.
4. Have fun and engage people in surprising ways.	In progress /Dropped	Neutral	Task was not recommended for implementation. This Strategy should focus on training and workshops for local communities to produce appropriate, quality events.
Goal 2. Anchor Clusters and Anchor Attractions Focus with Strong Cross-Promotional Efforts			
5. Expand the convention and meeting booking function of the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.	In progress	Positive	Additional staff was hired in 2015 to help implement this strategy. The meeting facility guide has also been updated in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Some tasks require the interest, approval and cooperation with local communities (to address infrastructure gaps), and with the Snohomish County Lodging Association.

Strategy	Status	Reflections on Impact	Summary Progress Notes
6. Strengthen the aviation cluster and knit it to the broader network of tourism assets.	Ongoing	Positive	Much work has been completed and is ongoing to develop and strengthen the aviation cluster. However, this Strategy assumed that the broader network of hidden tourism assets was more robust than it is. The aviation attractions are not as well-known locally as they should be by the larger and smaller tourism assets, and need more stakeholder engagement and development work to connect.
7. Build on the County's strengths in tribal gaming.	Ongoing	Positive	Continue building relationships and partnerships with the tribes, particularly with the hotels and the shopping/retail. Don't limit engagement to gaming in the future.
8. Leverage the County's considerable outdoor recreation assets.	Ongoing	Positive	This Strategy has been a pillar of the plan. The work done to implement this Strategy produced new roundtables, rural tourism workshops, water trail planning, working with recreation and conservation organizations, and connecting hidden assets with outdoor recreation for tourism development.
9. Promote and support the County's diverse shopping options.	Ongoing	Positive	Shopping mobile tours and ads have been completed and ongoing since 2012.
10. Continue to build the County's organized sporting events market.	Ongoing	Positive	The sports program is earning excellent returns. However, funding the sports program could be improved by a more predictable funding model.
11. Promote adventure - focused day trip itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions.	Ongoing	Positive	Work has been ongoing since 2013. This should be combined with Strategy 12 into a more regional approach.
12. Promote all itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions within target audience communities.	Ongoing	Positive	Advertising campaign on adventure day trips has been completed and ongoing work since 2012. Should be combined with Strategy 11.
Goal 3. Rich Network of Sustaining Clusters and Sustaining Assets			
13. Take a collaborative approach to strengthening the County's sustaining tourism clusters.	Ongoing	Neutral	This is a large and ongoing undertaking. These focus areas will always be a priority, and working with stakeholders on collaborative ways to connect, promote, and support them will always be ongoing.

Strategy	Status	Reflections on Impact	Summary Progress Notes
14. Identify sustainable tourism opportunities.	Complete	Neutral	Sustainable features of some varied attractions are notable (green built structures – rain gardens, etc.) and are inventoried by the County Office of Sustainability. The term “sustainability” has changed over the years, and the intent of this strategy needs to be clarified.
Goal 4. Stronger County Tourism Infrastructure			
15. Improve the tourism information delivery system.	Complete and Ongoing	Positive	Tourism Bureau website has been improved and includes itinerary functions. More storytelling features will be added in 2016.
16. Update approach to putting information in visitors’ hands.	Ongoing	Positive	There has been development of a variety of tools, particularly mobile and digital, for delivering information and tours.
17. Improve wayfinding and support the serendipity of discovery.	In progress	Positive	Many recreation and tourism wayfinding and signage projects have been installed on state and forest roads, and in municipalities and parks. However, much coordination is needed from cities, towns, and WSDOT.
18. Improve public transportation options to enhance access to tourism assets.	Not started	Neutral	Many regional needs have been identified, but access to public transportation is a shared problem for many areas of Snohomish County.
19. Support the broadening of the County’s range of overnight options.	In progress	Positive	Several new hotels have opened in the county since 2010, and more hotels are coming online. Lodging options are still needed in rural areas. Recruitment of higher-end lodging options has not yet been implemented.
Goal 5. Enhanced Organizational Capacity			
20. Strengthen the County’s ability to coordinate tourism efforts and implement this Plan.	Complete and Ongoing	Positive	A single, full-time position was created in 2014 to implement the plan. Six-month temporary help was added 2016 to assist with projects. Additional staff is needed for ongoing plan implementation.
21. Use data to strengthen tourism promotion and development efforts.	Ongoing	Positive	Many tasks completed and ongoing for data collection, but there is room for improvement to help strengthen collaborative sharing capabilities.
22. Broaden and enrich the conversation between the County and stakeholders.	Ongoing	Positive	Ongoing engagement and discussions with tribal partners related to various aspects of tourism including trails and outdoor recreation can support indigenous experiences.

Strategy	Status	Reflections on Impact	Summary Progress Notes
23. Build stronger partnerships with the tribes to enhance and encourage indigenous tourism experiences.	Ongoing	Positive	Ongoing engagement and discussions with tribal partners related to various aspects of tourism including trails and outdoor recreation can support indigenous experiences.
24. Support professional development for the County's tourism workforce.	Ongoing	Positive	Many professional development workshops and trainings have been held and are ongoing.
Goal 6. Tourism Funding Resources Align with Strategic Goals			
25. Leverage the lodging tax effectively to advance the tourism strategies.	Complete and Ongoing	Neutral /Positive	Some tasks completed, but revised grant criteria could improve return-on-investment (ROI) in areas that have no lodging taxes available. Improvements to application process are needed (e.g. make applications more visible and available online and provide additional workshops for applicants).
26. Support the emerging Tourism Promotion Area.	Complete and Ongoing	Positive	Task completed. Additional improvements may help better connect the TPA funding applications with the Strategic Plan.

Exhibit 5 – 2010 Strategic Plan Planned Budgeted and Actual Expenditures*

Strategy	Planned (2011-2015)	Actual (2011-2016)	Planned-Actual
1	\$250,000	\$147,047	\$102,953
2	\$72,500	\$77,451	-\$4,951
3	\$80,000	\$4,000	\$76,000
4	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000
5	\$30,000	\$69,925	-\$39,925
6	\$125,000	\$34,177	\$90,823
7	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	\$0	\$62,108	-\$62,108
9	\$200,000	\$41,063	\$158,937
10	\$0	\$9,740	-\$9,740
11	\$100,000	\$263,404	-\$163,404
12	\$0	\$0	\$0
13	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000
14	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
15	\$225,000	\$193,890	\$31,110
16	\$170,000	\$19,771	\$150,229
17	\$225,000	\$0	\$225,000
18	\$0	\$0	\$0
19	\$0	\$0	\$0
20	\$510,000	\$250,000	\$260,000
21	\$90,000	\$9,000	\$81,000
22	\$0	\$500	-\$500
23	\$0	\$0	\$0
24	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
25	\$0	\$0	\$0
26	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,207,500	\$1,182,076	\$1,025,424
	% Spent of Budget		54%

Source: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau 2016, Snohomish County Tourism Department, and BERK, 2016

*Notes: Actual expenditures are best-guess estimates provided by the Tourism Bureau. It combines whole numbers for 2011-2015 and an estimate for the year 2016 of only STP funds that the Bureau invoiced the County for, although some strategies were accomplished through the use of both LTAC funds and STP funds. These numbers are not meant to be used for financial accounting, but to provide an estimate for comparison purposes.

1.6 Assessing the Impact of the 2010 Plan

As asserted in the 2010 Plan, tourism is economic development. It creates many tourism-related jobs, from entry-level to professional, and boosts jobs and economic activity in related sectors. Successful economic development is typically defined as bringing new money into a region. Tourism does just that, injecting dollars from outside the region into the local economy. These new dollars create direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts that ripple through the economy.

Investments in tourism may generate additional benefits by enhancing quality of life for local residents, and by raising awareness of what the region has to offer. Individuals may come once to an area for leisure or business travel, only to return later in life to relocate a business, buy a second home, or retire. Such impacts are impossible to measure, but every tourism region has stories that demonstrate how this dynamic plays out.

Significant resources were invested to implement the 2010 Plan. As Exhibit 5 shows above, approximately \$1.2 million was spent to implement the plan between 2011 and 2016. While it is natural to ask about the return on that investment, it is impossible to show direct correlation between many investments and the performance of the Snohomish County tourism industry. A later work product in the planning process will report on key measures of Snohomish County tourism market performance. While this should not be seen as a direct correlation with the investments and efforts made in implementing the 2010 Plan, it will provide some useful context.

The complicated nature of the county's tourism market makes it impractical to analyze how the market would have performed had these expenditures not been made. Snohomish tourism is affected by significant exposure to exogenous economic effects such as the health of the Canadian or Chinese economy. Moreover, Snohomish is a large county, with rural and urban assets, drawing a diverse set of travelers. This diversity is a strength, but also means it is a fragmented and complex system with many interrelated factors, making it difficult to isolate the impact from individual investments.

Given these complications and the impossibility of conducting a robust return on investment study within the context of this planning process, it is helpful to review what is known about investments in tourism generally. A paper by Oxford Economics¹ makes the following assertion: "A 10% increase in a destination's visitor-related employment relative to the U.S. average tends to be followed by a 1.5% rise in broader employment in the short-run." In addition to direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts associated with attracting tourist and visitor spending to a region, the report describes the following "catalytic impacts of destination promotion."

- ***Building transportation networks and connecting to new markets.*** By supporting travel and tourism, destination promotion supports development of transportation infrastructure, helping support greater accessibility and supply logistics that are, in turn, important in attracting investment in other sectors.
- ***Raising the destination profile.*** Destination promotion builds awareness, familiarity, and relationships in commercial sectors (institutions, companies, individuals) that are critical in attracting investment. Similarly, destination promotion raises the destination profile among potential new residents, supporting skilled workforce growth that is critical to economic development.
- ***Targeted economic development through conventions and trade shows.*** By securing meetings, conventions, and trade shows for local facilities, destination management organizations attract the very prospects that economic development agencies target. Not only do such visits create valuable exposure among business decision makers, they create direct opportunities for economic development agencies to deepen valuable connections with attendees.
- ***Raising the quality of life.*** The visitor economy that is fueled by destination promotion supports amenities and standards of living that are valued by residents and that are important in attracting investment in other sectors.

¹ Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development. Oxford Economics, November 2014.
<http://www.oxfordeconomics.com/engine>

Beyond asserting these benefits, the report explains why destination-level marketing is effective and why pooling resources to invest in a county-wide tourism market makes sense. Larger-scale efforts overcome three marketing challenges that individual tourism and visitor attractions face:

- First, the report asserts that “the visitor economy is fragmented.” This means that “at the level of an individual business, the returns on independent marketing to attract visitors to a destination can be less compelling. However, when viewed at the level of the destination, there is a more direct connection. The destination captures a substantial dollar amount per visitor, and in aggregate there are compelling returns on effective destination marketing.”
- Second, “the primary motivator of a trip is usually the experience of a destination, extending beyond the offerings marketed by a single business.” Visitors typically do not travel based on the merits of an individual business or attraction, but based on the aggregate offerings of the region.
- Finally, “effective marketing requires scale to reach potential visitors across multiple markets.” This simply means that effective marketing can require the “significant and consistent funding” associated with pooled regional efforts, rather than small-scale efforts by individual businesses that struggle to be heard above the noise of the marketplace of competing attractions.

While this and other research bolsters the rationale for a county-wide tourism strategy, quality of execution is of greatest importance. The review of the 2010 Plan contained in this document creates an important opportunity to evaluate what is working and what is not. This will be a critical input into the development of the most effective strategy for the timeframe beyond 2017.

2.0 REVIEW OF TOURISM FUNDING MECHANISMS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes two funding mechanisms that Snohomish County currently uses to support and promote its tourism industry:

1. **Lodging Tax.** Under Washington State law, the lodging tax can be levied by counties, cities, or public facilities districts. The 2000 Snohomish County Strategic Plan for Tourism Development and Marketing established the development of significant new tourism attractions through capital investment as a strategic priority. To provide the financing for these investments in the County's tourism infrastructure, a county-wide Public Facilities District (PFD) was created and partnerships with city-level PFDs were developed.
2. **Tourism Promotion Area.** A Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) is an established geographic boundary, within which lodging establishments can self-impose an additional nightly fee on each room-night. TPA assessment revenues can be used to fund tourism promotion and development activities. The lodging industry in Snohomish County proposed implementation of a TPA which was adopted by Council in 2011.

The revenue sources, purposes, and uses of these two tourism funding mechanisms are described in more detail in the following sections. The last section in this chapter presents projections of future Lodging Tax and TPA revenues.

2.2 Lodging Tax

The lodging tax fund is a dedicated fund authorized by state and county statute that taxes hotel and motel overnight stays and uses the receipts for the purpose of developing and promoting tourism in Snohomish County.

Source of Funds

Snohomish County currently levies and collects the legal maximum lodging tax. The lodging tax fund has two sources, both based on taxes levied on lodging fees:

1. **The Small Fund.** This fund is supported by a credit to the county of one-third of Washington State's sales tax collected on lodging, which totals 2% of each eligible sale. This fund is also known as the "Hotel-Motel Tax Fund" or "The First Two Percent." For the purposes of this document, it will be referred to as The Small Fund.
2. **The Large Fund.** This fund is supported by an additional 2% tax levied on the sale of lodging that accrues directly to the County. This fund is also known as the "Regional Tourism Tax Fund" or "The Second Two Percent." For the purposes of this document, it will be referred to as The Large Fund.

The County does not receive revenues from the sale of lodging that takes place in tribally-owned lodging on tribal land. A current issue nationwide is the collection of lodging tax revenues from online bookings. The County is receiving tax revenues from the sale of lodging through online travel websites, though some of this may be based on wholesale rather than retail costs.

The revenue source and statutes regulating each of these funds are described in more detail below.

The Small Fund

The Small Fund revenues come from a special excise tax authorized by RCW 67.28.180 and RCW 67.28.1801, and enacted by Snohomish County Code (SCC) 4.40.010. These statutes allow Snohomish County to levy and collect a special excise tax not to exceed 2% on the sale of lodging within County boundaries that is subject to sales tax. The revenues are given to the County as a credit against the state sales tax on each eligible lodging sale. Snohomish County levies the maximum allowable 2%, meaning the County earns \$0.02 for each \$1.00 paid for eligible lodging. The County receives its allocations from the state on a monthly basis.

Money in The Small Fund that has not yet been withdrawn may be invested by Snohomish County in interest-bearing securities, with earnings returned to the Fund.

This revenue source is called The Small Fund because the County does not receive the revenues if the lodging sale takes place within a city that already levies this excise tax. Snohomish County does not receive this revenue from lodging sales in the following cities that levy this tax:

- City of Arlington
- City of Bothell
- City of Edmonds
- City of Everett
- City of Lynnwood
- City of Marysville
- City of Monroe
- City of Mountlake Terrace
- City of Mukilteo
- City of Snohomish

The Large Fund

The Large Fund revenues come from an excise tax authorized by RCW 67.28.181 and enacted by SCC 4.41.010. These statutes allow the County to levy and collect an excise tax not to exceed 2% on the sale of lodging within County boundaries that is subject to sales tax. This tax is in addition to other taxes levied on lodging fees, and accrues to the County regardless of the jurisdiction in which the lodging sale takes place. Snohomish County levies the maximum allowable 2%, meaning the County earns \$0.02 for each \$1.00 paid for eligible lodging.

Money in The Large Fund that has not yet been withdrawn may be invested by the County in interest-bearing securities, with earnings returned to the Fund.

Fund Administration

State and county statutes require Snohomish County to create a dedicated fund to receive lodging tax revenues, and that the revenues are expended only on eligible activities as described in the following section. The County Executive is responsible for administering both The Large Fund and The Small Fund, and for appointing a fund manager for each.

RCW 67.28.1817 requires that Snohomish County, as a jurisdiction with a population greater than 5,000, also establish a Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) to impose or make changes to the rate or use of the lodging tax. The statute requires that the LTAC consist of at least five members appointed by the County, two of whom must be representatives of businesses required to collect the tax and two of whom must be involved in activities authorized to be funded by the tax. If the County's LTAC consists of more than five members, the number of members from each of those two groups must remain equal to one another. The final member must be an elected official of the County, and this member will serve as

Committee Chair. Membership will be reviewed and changed as necessary on an annual basis by the appointing authority. The LTAC may also include one non-voting member who is an elected official of a city or town in the County.

The purpose of LTAC is to advise the County decision-makers on how to spend fund revenues. Snohomish County's LTAC currently consists of the following members:

- One County Councilmember (serving as Chair)
- Two lodging industry representatives
- Two tourism industry representatives
- The Snohomish County Tourism Board Director (non-voting ex-officio member)

Allowed Uses of Lodging Tax Funds

Use of The Large Fund and The Small Fund is regulated by RCW 67.28.1815 and RCW 67.28.1816.

RCW 67.28.1815 states that the revenues must be used for the purpose of paying costs of tourism promotion, acquisition of tourism-related facilities, or operation of tourism-related facilities. They may also be used to fund a multi-jurisdictional tourism-related facility.

RCW 67.28.1816 allows revenues to be used for the following additional purposes:

- The marketing and operations of special events and festivals.
- The operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned by nonprofit organizations, municipalities, or public facilities districts.

The Small Fund

The Small Fund is additionally regulated by SCC 4.40.050, which says The Small Fund revenues may be used for the following purposes:

- Acquisition, construction, improvement, or operation of convention center facilities, stadium facilities, or performance and/or visual arts center facilities.
- Payment of general obligation or revenue bonds used for the above purposes.
- Advertising, publicizing, or distributing information for the purpose of attracting visitors and encouraging tourist expansion. This can include promotional materials, development of strategic tourism plans, and other such uses.

SCC 4.40.060 encourages the fund administrator to define eligibility of sponsors and projects broadly to encourage wide participation and innovative proposals.

The Large Fund

The Large Fund is additionally regulated by SCC 4.41.030, which says the funds may be used for:

- Acquiring or operating, either jointly or individually, tourism-related facilities.
- To pay or secure general obligation or revenue bonds issued for the purposes referenced above.
- To develop strategies to expand tourism within the county.
- To support comprehensive regional marketing for Snohomish County tourism.

Use of Lodging Tax Funds in Snohomish County

The Small Fund

All dollars in The Small Fund not used for fund administration (capped at 12% of annual appropriations) are distributed through a competitive award process. Although The Small Fund can be used for many different purposes, in practice, The Small Fund has primarily been used in Snohomish County to support local tourism promotion initiatives throughout the County including brochures and advertising. These promotional initiatives are often a small piece of a larger project, such as an event or festival that needs marketing support.

Use of The Small Fund dollars for marketing purposes has traditionally been allowed for advertising and promotional campaigns in communities more than 50 miles away from the site of the attraction. The intention of this requirement has been to draw visitors more likely to stay overnight in the County's hotels and motels, which is desirable both for the additional spending overnight visitors bring, and because these visits directly contribute to the Lodging Tax fund, to some degree replenishing the dollars that were expended in the marketing effort. Attracting overnight visitors is not currently a requirement of either state or county law, but it is a criterion that is considered in application evaluation. Although it is not an eligibility requirement, it is part of the bonus selection criteria of The Small Fund application process (see Exhibit 11).

If not all of The Small Fund revenues are spent in a given year, the excess funds accumulate. The current fund reserve is approximately \$800,000. In recent years, awards have exceeded revenues, drawing the reserve down from a high of just over \$1 million in 2013. The LTAC has established a minimum fund balance of \$500,000 and expressed an intention to fund qualifying applications as long as the fund balance remains above this target.

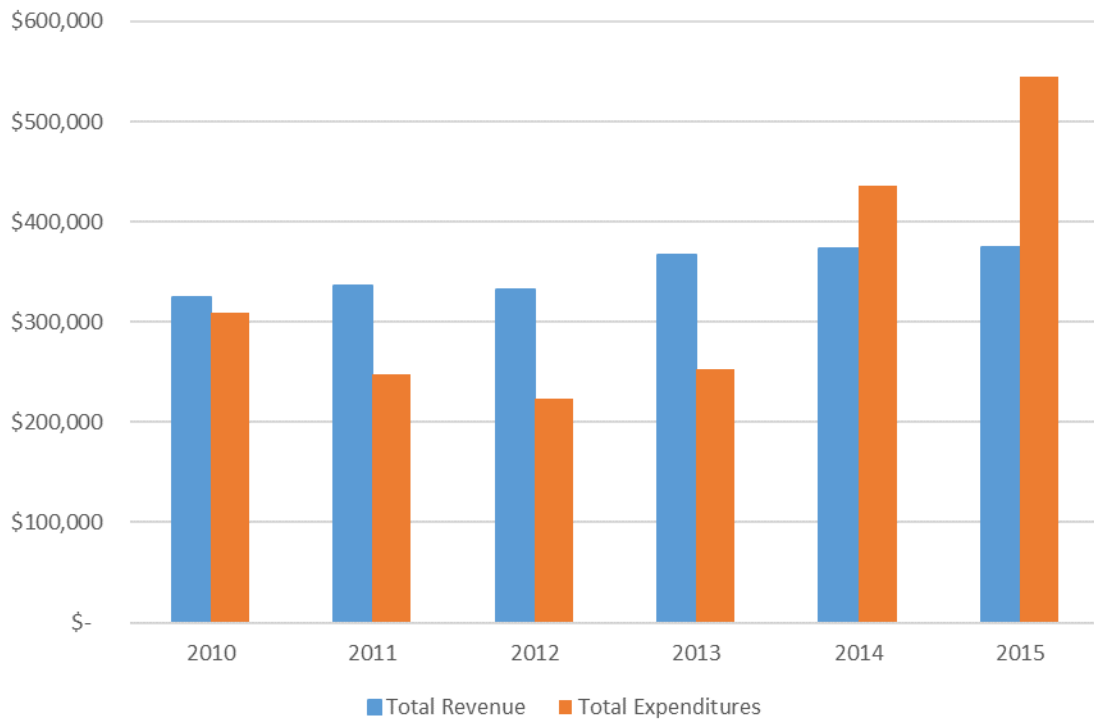
Exhibit 6 and Exhibit 7 show the award history for the Small Fund. The impacts of the 2007-2009 recession are seen between 2009 and 2012, during which time revenues dropped and recovered, with a total decrease of 1.2% over this four-year period. Since then, revenues grew by just over 10% in 2013 and nearly 2% in 2014, with 2015 revenues on par with 2014.

Exhibit 6 – Small Fund History: 2005-2015

REVENUE	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Tax Receipts					\$ 333,272	
Interest and Miscellaneous Revenue					\$ 3,594	
Total Revenue	\$ 247,994	\$ 268,560	\$ 332,512	\$ 334,650	\$ 336,866	
Percent Change		8.3%	23.8%	0.6%	0.7%	
EXPENDITURES						
Projects Requested	30	26	27	30	9	
Projects Awarded	24	25	26	28	9	
% of projects awarded	80%	96%	96%	93%	100%	
Dollars Requested	\$ 362,912	\$ 342,699	\$ 379,805	\$ 459,995	\$ 194,890	
Dollars Awarded	\$ 180,766	\$ 192,956	\$ 221,250	\$ 251,248	\$ 8,500	
% of dollars awarded	50%	56%	58%	55%	4%	
Total Projects Cost	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	
Total Sponsor Match	\$ 1,152,633	\$ 1,089,511	\$ 1,511,187	\$ 1,601,704	unknown	
Administration	\$ 24,650	\$ 26,312	\$ 30,170	\$ 34,261	\$ 59,145	
Total Expenditures	\$ 205,416	\$ 219,268	\$ 251,420	\$ 285,509	\$ 67,645	
FUND BALANCE CHANGE						
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance	\$ 42,578	\$ 49,292	\$ 81,092	\$ 49,141	\$ 269,221	
Ending Fund Balance	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	
Percent Change						
REVENUE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tax Receipts	\$ 322,282	\$ 334,787	\$ 331,462	\$ 364,811	\$ 371,728	\$ 369,844
Interest and Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 2,101	\$ 1,135	\$ 1,264	\$ 1,886	\$ 2,105	\$ 4,146
Total Revenue	\$ 324,383	\$ 335,922	\$ 332,726	\$ 366,697	\$ 373,833	\$ 373,990
Percent Change	-3.7%	3.6%	-1.0%	10.2%	1.9%	0.0%
EXPENDITURES						
Projects Requested	17	17	23	26	24	31
Projects Awarded	17	17	22	24	23	31
% of projects awarded	100%	100%	96%	92%	96%	100%
Dollars Requested	\$ 246,776	\$ 246,776	\$ 1,032,238	\$ 327,455	\$ 466,070	\$ 642,807
Dollars Awarded	\$ 285,080	\$ 218,420	\$ 210,464	\$ 209,738	\$ 394,585	\$ 504,037
% of dollars awarded	116%	89%	20%	64%	85%	78%
Total Projects Cost	1,420,654	unknown	2,275,007	1,181,470	1,298,025	2,643,638
Total Sponsor Match	unknown	\$ 1,039,041	\$ 1,039,041	\$ 441,460	\$ 841,955	\$ 1,853,183
Administration	\$ 24,176	\$ 29,308	\$ 12,832	\$ 43,314	\$ 41,930	\$ 41,069
Total Expenditures	\$ 309,256	\$ 247,728	\$ 223,296	\$ 253,052	\$ 436,515	\$ 545,106
FUND BALANCE CHANGE						
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance	\$ 15,127	\$ 88,194	\$ 109,430	\$ 113,645	\$ (62,682)	\$ (171,116)
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 723,379	\$ 811,573	\$ 921,003	\$ 1,034,648	\$ 971,966	\$ 800,850
Percent Change		12.2%	13.5%	12.3%	-6.1%	-17.6%

Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 7 – Small Fund History Revenues and Expenditures



Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

The Large Fund

The Large Fund has emerged as a resource for projects of county-wide benefit, with a strong emphasis on funding capital facilities, which was a primary strategy of the 2000 Strategic Plan for Tourism Development and Marketing. In addition to assisting with the acquisition and construction of several regional tourism facilities (often in partnership with the Snohomish County PFD or a city-level PFD), The Large Fund revenues have also been dedicated to supporting an integrated program of local, regional, national, and international tourism promotion through the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.

The Fund was created in 1994 by the Snohomish County Council to support large tourism-related development projects of regional significance. The intent at the time was to allocate the funds evenly for three purposes:

- Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
- Everett's Memorial Stadium Improvements
- A regional tourism project in South County

The Bureau was founded in 1995, and Memorial Stadium improvements were completed in 1997. By the early 2000s, the Large Fund had accumulated a substantial reserve. To distribute these funds, the LTAC worked with County stakeholders to develop a strategy and program guidelines that aligned with the Goals of the 2000 Strategic Plan for Tourism Development and Marketing, culminating in a competitive funding process that awarded long-term funding to the Xfinity Arena (also in Everett) and the Lynnwood Convention Center (in South County), via the Lynnwood PFD.

Currently, the fund is being distributed as described below.

- **Contracting with the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.** The Large Fund distribution to the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau is set through contract. This distribution is used to support the administration and operation of the Bureau, and to fund the Bureau's selected marketing and promotion campaigns, including projects such as advertising, website operation, and brochure development.
- **Assisting with the acquisition and construction of regional tourism facilities.** Remaining Large Fund revenues are used to support regional tourism facilities, distributed evenly between the Everett area and the South County area to projects selected in the early 2000s. These obligations are described below:
 - **South County Share.** A portion of The Large Fund revenue is reserved for the South County area. Currently, this money is distributed to the Lynnwood PFD, which uses it to support the Lynnwood Convention Center. The Lynnwood PFD receives distributions according to a formula set in an inter-local agreement, up to a maximum of one-third of Large Fund revenues. In years where the scheduled amount is below the one-third maximum, the difference is put into a reserve fund. The Lynnwood PFD also receives funds from the Snohomish County PFD and from city lodging taxes.
 - **Everett Share.** This money is dedicated to paying off the bonds used to fund Everett's Memorial Stadium and the Xfinity Arena (previously the Comcast Arena). This appropriation pays the debt service on the bonds, and also contributes to the required bond reserve, which will help pay the debt service when revenues are insufficient. The City of Everett receives the larger of the following amounts each year from The Large Fund:
 - An amount sufficient to pay for the Everett Memorial Stadium bond and its required reserve; or
 - An amount equal to the percentage of Large Fund revenues collected within the City of Everett, multiplied by net Large Fund revenues (including interest earned and less administrative costs)

In years where the bond service amounts exceed the formulaic distribution amount, the County has made intra-fund transfers to the City of Everett sufficient to service the bonds. All such intra-fund transfers are tracked, and reverse transfers to pay back these "loans" are made in later years when revenues are sufficient.

The Xfinity Arena project was led by the Snohomish County PFD, which contributes funding from its own state-rebated sales tax revenue. Additionally, the Xfinity Arena receives funds from operations and from City of Everett lodging taxes.

Current Balance and Commitments

The Large Fund currently has a surplus of approximately \$3.5 million. There is not currently a strategy for how much of a surplus the County would like to carry, or how surplus dollars should be used.

A portion of future revenues are committed to paying the debt service on the bonds identified above. Future funds are also committed to the Lynnwood PFD, according to the formula in the inter-local agreement. Exhibit 8 and Exhibit 9 show a history of The Large Fund revenues and obligations for the years 2005-2015.

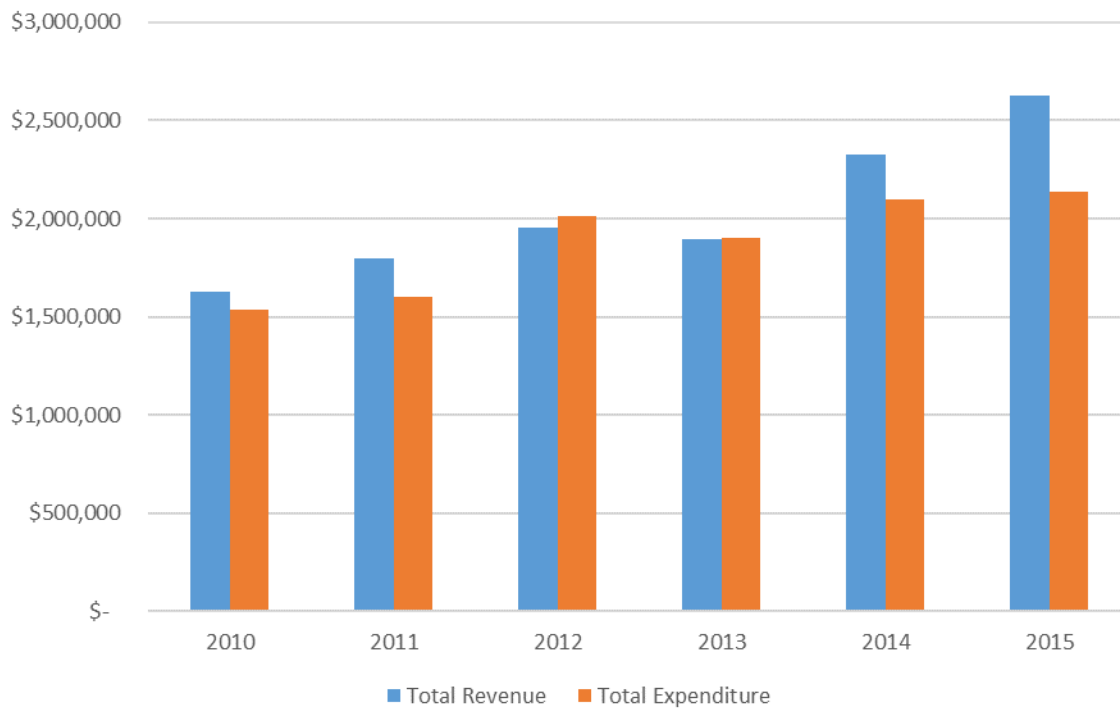
Exhibit 8 – Large Fund History: 2005-2015

REVENUE	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Tax Revenue	\$ 1,327,785	\$ 1,605,832	\$ 1,867,355	\$ 1,921,565	\$ 1,561,997
Interest Earned	\$ 41,626	\$ 52,047	\$ 86,251	\$ 52,864	\$ 15,612
Micellaneous Revenue					\$ 929
Total Revenue	\$ 1,369,411	\$ 1,657,879	\$ 1,953,606	\$ 1,974,429	\$ 1,578,538
Percent Change		21.1%	17.8%	1.1%	-20.1%
EXPENDITURES					
Lynnwood PFD	\$ 449,946	\$ 467,943	\$ 486,661	\$ 506,128	\$ 526,373
City of Everett	\$ 299,509	\$ 313,309	\$ 331,309	\$ 335,109	\$ 353,109
Tourism Bureau (including VIC and STP Projects)	\$ 476,616	\$ 502,750	\$ 531,650	\$ 573,829	\$ 682,525
2010 Strategic Tourism Plan (incl staffing)					
Administration	\$ 25,158	\$ 14,238	\$ 36,690	\$ 43,152	\$ 36,101
Total Expenditure	\$ 1,251,229	\$ 1,298,240	\$ 1,386,310	\$ 1,458,218	\$ 1,598,108
Percent Change		3.8%	6.8%	5.2%	9.6%
FUND BALANCE CHANGE					
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance	\$ 118,182	\$ 359,639	\$ 567,296	\$ 516,211	\$ (19,570)
Ending Fund Balance	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	\$ 2,283,770
Percent Change					

REVENUE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tax Revenue	\$ 1,620,723	\$ 1,793,429	\$ 1,894,762	\$ 1,889,668	\$ 2,321,693	\$ 2,615,249
Interest Earned	\$ 5,033	\$ 3,656	\$ 3,987	\$ 5,457	\$ 6,242	\$ 13,293
Micellaneous Revenue		\$ 27	\$ 56,210			
Total Revenue	\$ 1,625,756	\$ 1,797,112	\$ 1,954,959	\$ 1,895,125	\$ 2,327,935	\$ 2,628,542
Percent Change	3.0%	10.5%	8.8%	-3.1%	22.8%	12.9%
EXPENDITURES						
Lynnwood PFD	\$ 513,836	\$ 534,566	\$ 563,031	\$ 615,782	\$ 640,412	\$ 666,028
City of Everett	\$ 373,449	\$ 398,269	\$ 310,139	\$ 432,639	\$ 398,639	\$ 370,389
Tourism Bureau (including VIC and STP Projects)	\$ 627,525	\$ 641,361	\$ 1,105,340	\$ 818,104	\$ 953,003	\$ 945,750
2010 Strategic Tourism Plan (incl staffing)					\$ 55,326	\$ 109,011
Administration	\$ 22,057	\$ 27,873	\$ 35,613	\$ 37,612	\$ 50,432	\$ 47,556
Total Expenditure	\$ 1,536,867	\$ 1,602,069	\$ 2,014,123	\$ 1,904,137	\$ 2,097,812	\$ 2,138,734
Percent Change	-3.8%	4.2%	25.7%	-5.5%	10.2%	2.0%
FUND BALANCE CHANGE						
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance	\$ 88,889	\$ 195,043	\$ (59,164)	\$ (9,012)	\$ 230,123	\$ 489,808
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 2,372,660	\$ 2,600,774	\$ 2,541,611	\$ 2,747,543	\$ 3,068,514	\$ 3,558,324
Percent Change	3.9%	9.6%	-2.3%	8.1%	11.7%	16.0%

Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 9 – Large Fund Revenues and Expenditures



Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

Additional Funding for Snohomish County Facilities

In addition to The Large Fund dollars, many of Snohomish County's tourism and entertainment venues have benefited from Public Facilities District (PFD) funding, either from the County PFD or from a city-specific PFD, or from both. Exhibit 10 summarizes the PFDs in Snohomish County, noting both the county-wide PFD and city-specific PFDs.

Exhibit 10 – Snohomish County Public Facilities Districts

Public Facilities District	Funded Facilities
Snohomish County Public Facilities District	Everett Arena
	Lynnwood Public Facilities District (the Lynnwood Convention Center)
	Edmonds Center for the Arts
	National Flight Interpretive Center (the Future of Flight Museum)
Edmonds Public Facilities District	Edmonds Center for the Arts
Everett Public Facilities District	Xfinity Arena
Lynnwood Public Facilities District	Lynnwood Convention Center

Award Process and Criteria

The Small Fund

The Small Fund revenues are distributed through a competitive award process. In recent years, the County sponsors one application period each year, during which eligible entities (nonprofit organizations, public, or public-private entities) submit proposals for project assistance. Applications must include descriptions of eligibility, scope of work, project timeline, letters of recommendation, estimated budget, available matching share, and an explanation of cooperative commitments.

The LTAC is responsible for reviewing applications and submitting recommendations for funding to the County Council, which makes the final project allocation decisions. Winning projects are then contracted for on a reimbursement basis. The LTAC first screens projects for eligibility and then uses the following selection criteria to rank eligible projects for recommendation to the Council. Each area is scored individually with total of 125 points available, as shown in Exhibit 11.

Exhibit 11 –Scoring Criteria for Small Fund Project Proposals

Criteria	Points
Clarity. The proposal should clearly and concisely describe the project and how, if appropriate, the County-supported project will be integrated into a larger effort.	15
Strategic Plan. The project should clearly explain how it advances one or more strategies in the 2011 Strategic Tourism Plan for Snohomish County.	15
Cost-Effectiveness. The project should be an efficient, economical use of the County’s funds.	15
Area of Impact. The application should describe how large of a region the project will impact.	10
Scale of Project. The project should be of an appropriate scale to be completed by the end of the award year	10
Degree of Match. The applicant must demonstrate that it can supply at least 25% of the total project cost from funds other than The Small Fund. A higher match rate will improve a project’s competitiveness.	10
Marketing. The application should describe how the project will be marketed and how that marketing will be coordinated with other community marketing and the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau’s county-wide marketing program.	10
Innovation. The project will be more competitive if it represents an unusual approach or moves the County’s Hotel/Motel program in a useful new direction.	5
Cooperative Nature. The application should describe the type and degree of inter-organizational or inter-jurisdictional partnerships the project will incorporate.	5
Self-evaluation. The application should describe how the applicant will provide for an adequate method of evaluating the effects of the proposed project upon completion.	5
Off-season Development. The application should describe if the project will promote tourism development during the off-season (September 1 – June 30).	5
Overnight Visitorship. The application should describe if the project will attract overnight visitorship, and if possible, quantify the anticipated stays and offer a credible method for corroborating the projections.	10
Local Ordinance Funds. If the project originates from a jurisdiction with its own Hotel/Motel ordinance, the application should describe what degree of support the community has committed from its Hotel/Motel funds.	10
Total	125

The Large Fund

Snohomish County Tourism Bureau Programs

All tourism-related activities undertaken by the Bureau are funded and scoped through a contract with the County, approved and signed by the County Executive. The previous contract covered a one-year period from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2015. Currently, 2016 and 2017 are one-year contracts. The budget and operational plan for each year are included as attachments to the five-year contract, and are updated on an annual basis.

The operational plan describes the actions that the Bureau will take during that year to achieve its goals, and the budget gives a more detailed cost estimate of each piece of the operational plan. The operational plan and the budget are split into supporting Visitor Services and Non-Visitor Services, with dollar amounts designated for each. The Bureau may reallocate up to 15% of the total funds within either budget at its discretion. If it would like to change the budget to a greater extent, it must get approval from the County Executive.

Separately-Funded Capital Projects

The County Executive and the County Council must both approve the dedication of funds to any other capital projects. Of the current capital projects that are being supported (Memorial Stadium, Xfinity Arena, and Lynnwood Convention Center), Xfinity Arena and Lynnwood Convention Center were chosen through a competitive application process in the early 2000s. The projects did not compete against each other, as money was designated separately for each of the geographic areas. For that competitive process, Snohomish County put together a Large Fund Program Guidelines and Application document that laid out the purpose of the fund, minimum eligibility criteria, and selection criteria.

Minimum eligibility criteria included:

- Projects must be consistent with RCW and the County's allocation strategy.
- The applicant and partners must make a substantial financial commitment to the proposed project.
- County funds will ordinarily not amount to any more than 30% of the total project cost, including debt service.
- Projects must demonstrate adequate feasibility through market and financial analyses.
- Projects demonstrate the capacity to be under construction within 24 months of approval.
- Project applicants must demonstrate they have control of the sites of their projects.
- County funds will be used for construction and "due diligence" project development costs, not operation and maintenance.

If a project met all of the above eligibility requirements, it was then scored according to the selection criteria, as shown in Exhibit 12. Qualifying applications were reviewed by a technical review panel that made funding recommendations to the LTAC. The LTAC then prepared their own comments on the proposals, before forwarding the recommendations to the County Council for final decision on project approvals and funding levels.

Exhibit 12 – Scoring Criteria Used in the Early 2000s to Select Large Fund Capital Projects

Criteria	Points
Business Plan Viability. The business plan was evaluated on the significance of its target market, the methodology for identifying the target market, how the project addresses the identified market, plans for marketing the completed project, short- and long-term financing, and strategies for evaluating project success.	10
Long-term Vision of Strategic Investment. The project was evaluated on whether it had a long-term vision of strategic investment that aligned with the Snohomish County Strategic Plan for Tourism Development and Promotion.	6
Quality of Life. The project was evaluated on how it would positively affect quality of life in the community, and how the applicant proposed measuring this success once the project was operable.	3
New Tourism Activity. The project was evaluated on the methodology used to establish estimated bed nights generated, and the scheme for tracking results.	10
Organizational Capacity. The applicant was evaluated on whether they had the organizational capacity to complete the project, what similar projects they had completed successfully, and if the applicant and its partners had the requisite skills and experience.	10
Community Tie-In. The project was evaluated on how well it fit into local community planning and the public planning process, and what the level of community support was.	6
Operational and Maintenance Capacity. The project was evaluated on whether the applicant demonstrated the financial and resource capacity to operate and maintain the facility once constructed.	7
Market Viability. The project was evaluated on whether the market the project proposed to serve truly exists, and that the market was of significant magnitude to generate adequate visitor bed nights.	10
Funding Plan. The project was evaluated on how the applicant planned to finance the full capital cost of the project, including plans for fundraising, capital campaigns, and evidence of committed funding.	7
Economic Benefit. The project was evaluated on its economic benefit from the public investment in the project, both direct and indirect.	7
Leverage of County Funds. The project was evaluated on how highly the County's funding would be leveraged by other funding sources.	6
Partnership/Collaboration. If the proposed project was collaborative between two or more agencies, the applicant had to submit information about the partnership and the different partners' commitments.	6
Facility Versatility. The project was evaluated on how versatile the facility would be, and how accessible it would be to uses beyond its primary purpose.	3
Off-Season Tourism Promotion. The project was evaluated on whether it would promote tourism development during the off-season.	3
Community Lodging Tax Support. If the project originated from a community that levies its own lodging tax, the applicant had to explain the degree of support coming from that fund.	6
Total	100

The Opportunity Fund

In addition to the regular distributions and grant cycles of The Large and Small Funds, the County offers funding through the Opportunity Fund. This money, either from The Large or Small Fund, is made available outside of the regular grant cycle to take advantage of extraordinary tourism promotion opportunities that don't align with normal application periods.

Requirements to access the fund are more rigorous than the other grant cycles, preventing the Opportunity Fund from becoming a way for organizations to circumvent the normal application process.

2.3 Tourism Promotion Area

A Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) is an established geographic boundary, within which lodging establishments can choose to assess, as a group, an additional fee on each room-night of lodging they sell. TPA assessment revenues may be used to fund tourism promotion and development activities.

The lodging business community proposed the details of the TPA in an initiation petition presented to the County Council. This petition was signed by the operators in the proposed area that would pay 60% or more of the proposed charges, as required by law. The County Council passed a resolution stating their intent to support the effort. Snohomish County established a TPA in 2011.

The TPA has the following characteristics:

- The TPA encompasses the Cities of Arlington, Bothell, Everett, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Marysville, Monroe, Mountlake Terrace, and Mukilteo as well as unincorporated areas of Snohomish County. The Cities joined the TPA through an inter-local agreement.
- The assessment imposed on the operators of lodging businesses in those areas is \$1.00 per room-night (half of the legal maximum of \$2.00 per room-night as stated in RCW 35.101.050), resulting in annual revenues just over \$1.1 million in 2016.
- The assessment is imposed on operators of lodging businesses with properties having 50 or more rooms.

All future lodging establishments in the area that fit the criteria must also participate in the TPA. Tulalip tribes and any lodging establishments tribally-owned and located on the Tulalip reservation are not required to participate.

Source of Funds

TPA revenues come from a dollar amount assessment on each room-night of lodging purchased in a defined geographic area. This adds a set amount to each night of lodging purchased by a customer, and this amount accrues to the TPA fund.

Fund Administration

All TPA revenues are deposited into a dedicated fund, used only to support tourism. RCW 35.101.030 gives the County Council final authority about how to use the money to promote tourism after they consider the recommendations of the TPA Board. It also gives the Council authority to create an advisory board for the purpose of fund distribution. The Snohomish County Code Chapter 4.118 further outlines the TPA, as well as fund administration and use.

The Snohomish County TPA Board has 14 members, nine lodging members (one from each of the five county council districts and four at-large) and five non-lodging members. Board members serve three-

year terms and collectively make funding recommendations to the Council. The Snohomish County Lodging Association industry group devised the election/appointment process, as well as the composition and bylaws for the Board. General guidelines from the Snohomish County Lodging Association Executive Board were that the Board should represent all areas and lodging types, and that members be nominated by the lodging community. This lodging community will also have the discretion to halt the assessment through a vote, if the industry isn't satisfied with how the account is being administered.

Allowed Uses of TPA Funds

Use of these funds is regulated by RCW 35.101, which authorizes the establishment of a TPA and permits the levy of special assessments to fund tourism promotion. The RCW defines eligible tourism promotion costs as “activities and expenditures designed to increase tourism and convention business, including but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming tourists, and operating tourism destination marketing organizations.” Use of these funds is also regulated by statutes passed by the Snohomish County Council.

Use of TPA Funds in Snohomish County

The TPA states that revenues may be used for the following purposes:

- The general promotion of tourism within Snohomish County as specified in the TPA business plan to be adopted annually.
- The marketing of convention and trade shows that benefit local tourism and the lodging business in the TPA.
- The marketing of Snohomish County in the travel industry in order to benefit local tourism and the lodging businesses in the TPA.
- The marketing of Snohomish County to recruit sporting events in order to benefit local tourism and the lodging businesses in the TPA.

Under these criteria, the Snohomish County Sports Commission (which is under the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau), and arts, culture, festivals, and sports organizations that bring an actual return on investment in overnight hotel stays as a result of their marketing efforts are eligible to compete for the funds. Personnel or administrative costs are generally not funded by the TPA grant.

Exhibit 13 presents a summary of revenue and expenditures since the inception of the TPA in 2011.

Exhibit 13 – TPA Revenues and Obligations

REVENUE	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tourism Promotion Area Assessments	\$ 358,787	\$ 902,053	\$ 991,915	\$ 1,063,345	\$ 1,122,735
Interest and Miscellaneous Revenue	\$	\$ 530	\$ 1,296	\$ 5,343	\$ 9,139
Total Revenue	\$ 358,787	\$ 902,583	\$ 993,211	\$ 1,068,688	\$ 1,131,874
Percent Change		151.6%	10.0%	7.6%	5.9%
EXPENDITURES					
Project Awards	\$ -	\$ 129,881	\$ 615,731	\$ 468,603	\$ 784,601
Administration	\$ -	\$ 59,922	\$ 74,350	\$ 80,933	\$ 85,476
Total Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 189,804	\$ 690,081	\$ 549,536	\$ 870,077
FUND BALANCE CHANGE					
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance	\$ 358,787	\$ 712,779	\$ 303,130	\$ 519,152	\$ 261,797
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 358,787	\$ 1,071,566	\$ 1,374,696	\$ 1,893,848	\$ 2,155,646
Percent Change		198.7%	28.3%	37.8%	13.8%

Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

Award Process and Criteria

TPA assessment funds are accessed by eligible organizations through an application process. The TPA Board reviews applications and makes recommendations to the Council for funding based on the criteria shown in Exhibit 14.

Exhibit 14 – Scoring Criteria for TPA Project Proposals

Criteria

Impact. Proposals should describe the expected economic impact of the project, including the projected direct and indirect dollar expenditures by visitors and the estimated number of visitors and overnight stays generated. Projects that promote overnight stays during the off season (January to May and September to December) and those that could benefit multiple lodging properties will be given special consideration.

Promotion and Marketing Plan. Proposals must show how the event will be promoted.

Evidence of Partnerships. Partnerships could include volunteer involvement, inter-jurisdictional, corporate, business, civic organization support, and/ or lodging community support.

Degree of Match. Projects are evaluated for a realistic budget and the percentage of matching resources. The degree of match (as demonstrated through other sources of cash, donations and in-kind contributions of materials, staff and volunteer time) is seen as one measure of a project's potential success and will be given greater consideration.

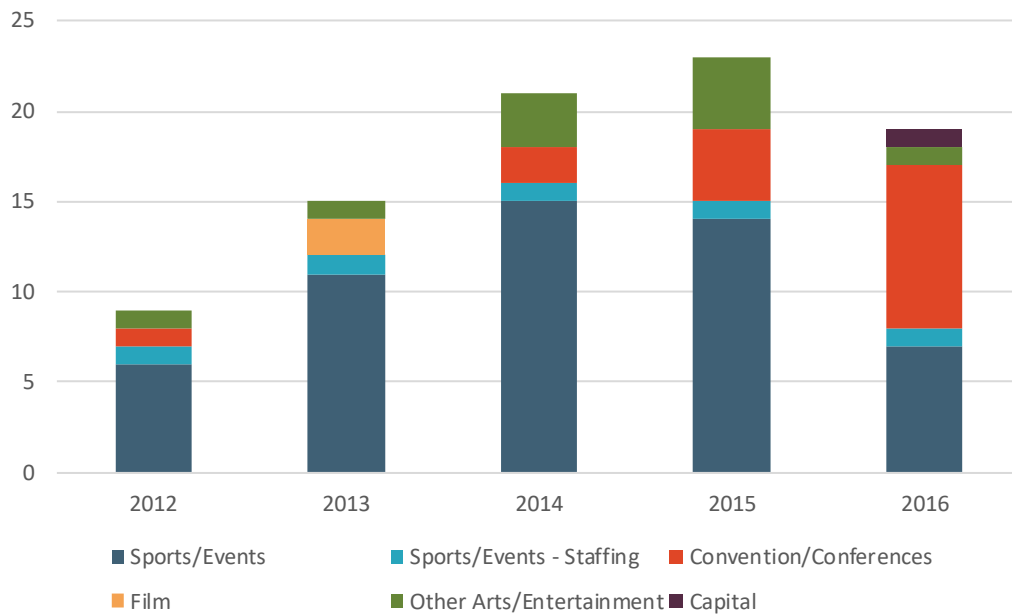
Management Capability. Applicants must demonstrate an ability to successfully complete the project through effective business practices in the areas of finance, administration, marketing, and production. The administrative credentials of paid or volunteer staff or individuals are considered.

Evaluation. Proposals must show a method for evaluating and tracking the proposed project upon completion. If it is a new event, calculation of anticipated overnight stays must be explained.

The Snohomish County Sports Commission adhere to the same rules as other applications for the funds, and submit applications with detailed uses of the requested funds before receiving any grants.

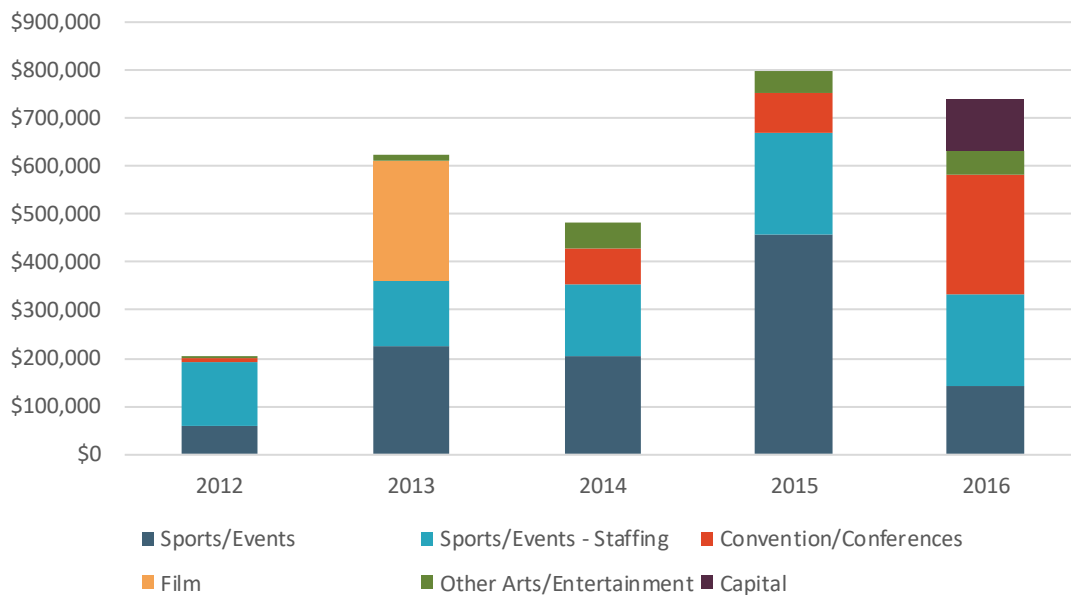
Exhibit 15 and Exhibit 16 provide a summary of TPA awards made to date. Sports/Events – Staffing designates funding awarded to the Snohomish County Sports Commission.

Exhibit 15 – Number of TPA Awards by Category



Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

Exhibit 16 – Dollars Awarded by Category



Source: Snohomish County, 2016; and BERK, 2016.

2.4 Tax Revenue Forecasts

This section presents anticipated future revenues in The Small Fund, Large Fund, and TPA. Future revenue amounts are presented as a range, based on actual revenues from 2009 to 2015. For each fund, the average annual growth rate over this period is used as the base for the projection, with the upper and lower bounds generated by applying a 95% confidence interval.

The effects of the recession are included in our base years (2009-2015) and so negatively impact the projected revenues. In this sense the projections are conservative. Future economic conditions are of course impossible to predict and future performance could be significantly stronger than projected, or significantly weaker if another economic downturn affects the tourism economy. Particularly given the number of foreign visitors to Snohomish County, lodging tax and TPA revenues are affected by both local and international economic conditions.

Lodging Tax

Exhibit 17 and Exhibit 18 estimate Snohomish County's future Small Fund revenues from 2016-2020, while the same information for The Large Fund is shown in Exhibit 19 and Exhibit 20. Actual revenues from 2009 to 2015 are included for comparison. The amounts in the table are total revenues, including both tax and interest revenues. Expected revenues are rounded, expressed in year-of-expenditure dollars, and not adjusted for inflation.

Small Fund Revenues

- From 2009-2016, the small fund actual receipts were slightly lower than the 2010 Low Estimates, with an average annual growth rate of 1.86%.
- On the high end of the range, Small Fund revenues are estimated to grow to approximately \$451,700 by 2020.
- On the low end of the range, the fund may generate approximately \$367,900 in 2020.

Large Fund Revenues

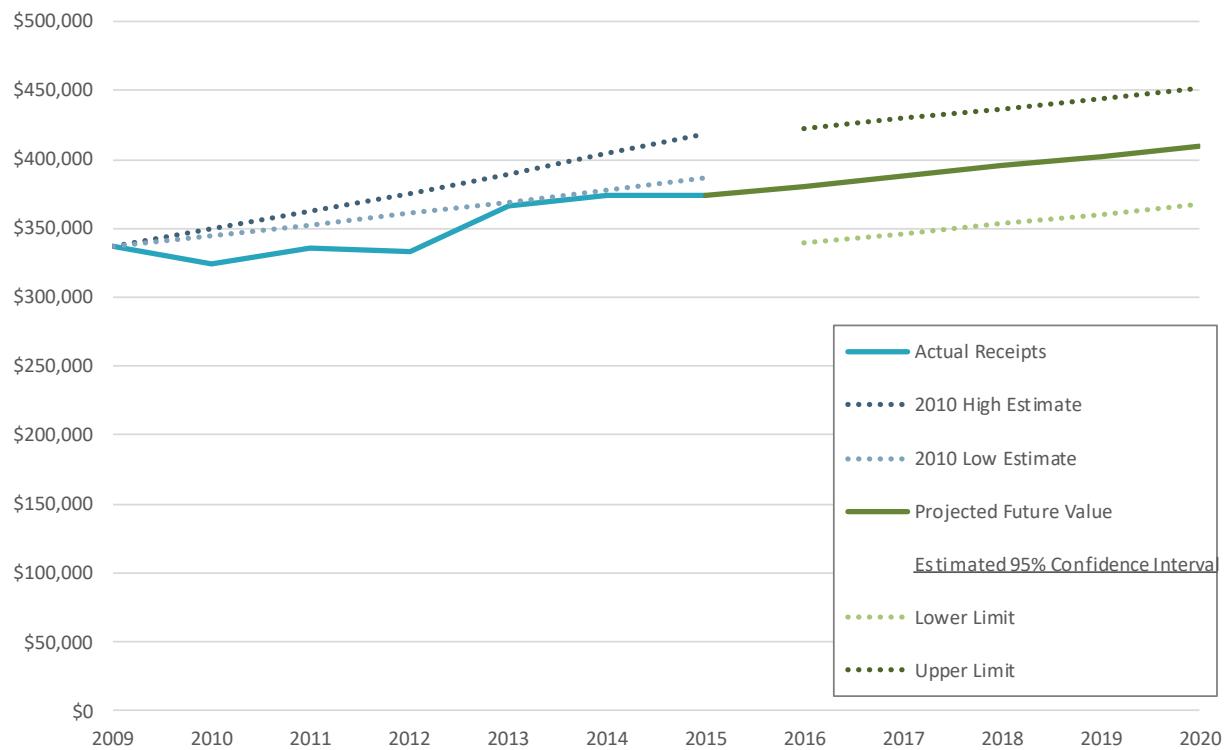
- The large fund performed within and above the 2010 high and low estimate range, and exceeding the 2010 high estimates in for 2014 and 2015. The average annual growth rate was 9.2%.
- On the high end of the range, Large Fund revenues are estimated to grow to approximately \$4.8 million by 2020.
- On the low end of the range, the fund may generate approximately \$3.3 million in 2020.

Exhibit 17 – Small Fund Actual and Projected Revenue

	2009	2010	2011	Actual 2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Projected 2018	2019	2020
Actual Receipts	\$336,866	\$324,383	\$335,922	\$332,726	\$366,697	\$373,833	\$373,990					
2010 Low Estimate	\$336,866	\$344,600	\$352,500	\$360,600	\$368,900	\$377,400	\$386,100					
2010 High Estimate	\$336,866	\$349,300	\$362,300	\$375,700	\$389,600	\$404,000	\$418,900					
Projected Future Value								\$380,900	\$387,900	\$395,100	\$402,400	\$409,800
Upper Limit								\$422,800	\$429,800	\$437,000	\$444,300	\$451,700
Lower Limit								\$339,000	\$346,000	\$353,200	\$360,500	\$367,900
Annual Growth Rate		-3.7%	3.6%	-1.0%	10.2%	1.9%	0.0%					
Average Annual Growth Rate	1.85%											
Standard Deviation	\$21,382											
Confidence Interval Range	1.96											

Source: BERK, 2016

Exhibit 18 – Small Fund Actual and Projected Revenue



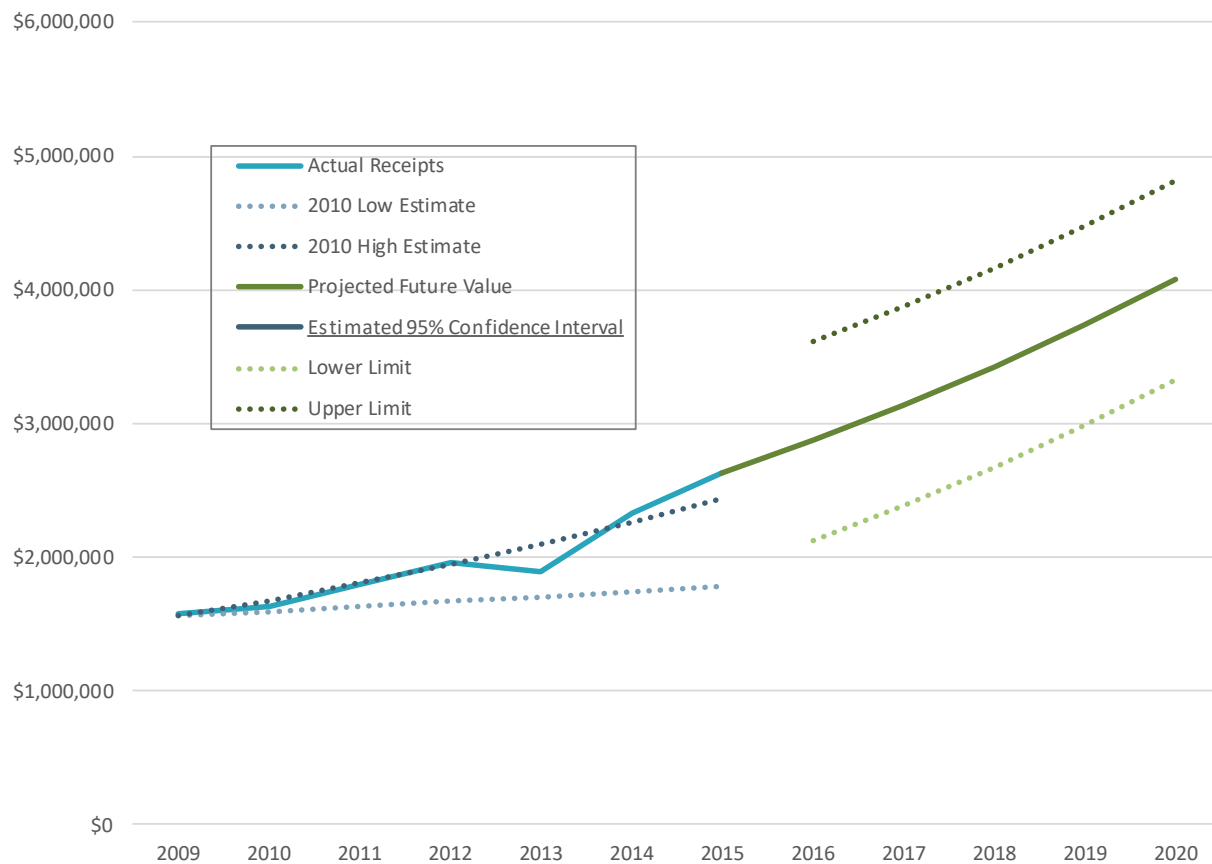
Source: BERK, 2016

Exhibit 19 – Large Fund Actual and Projected Revenue

	2009	2010	2011	Actual 2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Projected 2018	2019	2020
Actual Receipts	\$1,578,538	\$1,625,756	\$1,797,112	\$1,954,959	\$1,895,125	\$2,327,935	\$2,628,542					
2010 Low Estimate	\$1,557,978	\$1,593,800	\$1,630,500	\$1,668,000	\$1,706,300	\$1,745,600	\$1,785,700					
2010 High Estimate	\$1,557,978	\$1,677,900	\$1,807,100	\$1,946,300	\$2,096,200	\$2,257,600	\$2,431,400					
Projected Future Value								\$2,869,500	\$3,132,600	\$3,419,800	\$3,733,300	\$4,075,600
Upper Limit								\$3,615,500	\$3,878,600	\$4,165,800	\$4,479,300	\$4,821,600
Lower Limit								\$2,123,500	\$2,386,600	\$2,673,800	\$2,987,300	\$3,329,600
Annual Growth Rate			3%	11%	9%	-3%	23%	13%				
Average Annual Growth Rate	9.2%											
Standard Deviation	\$380,618											
Confidence Interval Range	1.96											

Source: BERK, 2016

Exhibit 20 – Large Fund Actual and Projected Revenue



Source: BERK, 2016

Tourism Promotion Area

Projections for TPA revenues are presented in Exhibit 21 and Exhibit 22. Actual revenues from 2012 to 2015 are included for comparison. The amounts in the table are total revenues, including both tax and interest revenues. Expected revenues are rounded, expressed in year-of-expenditure dollars, and not adjusted for inflation.

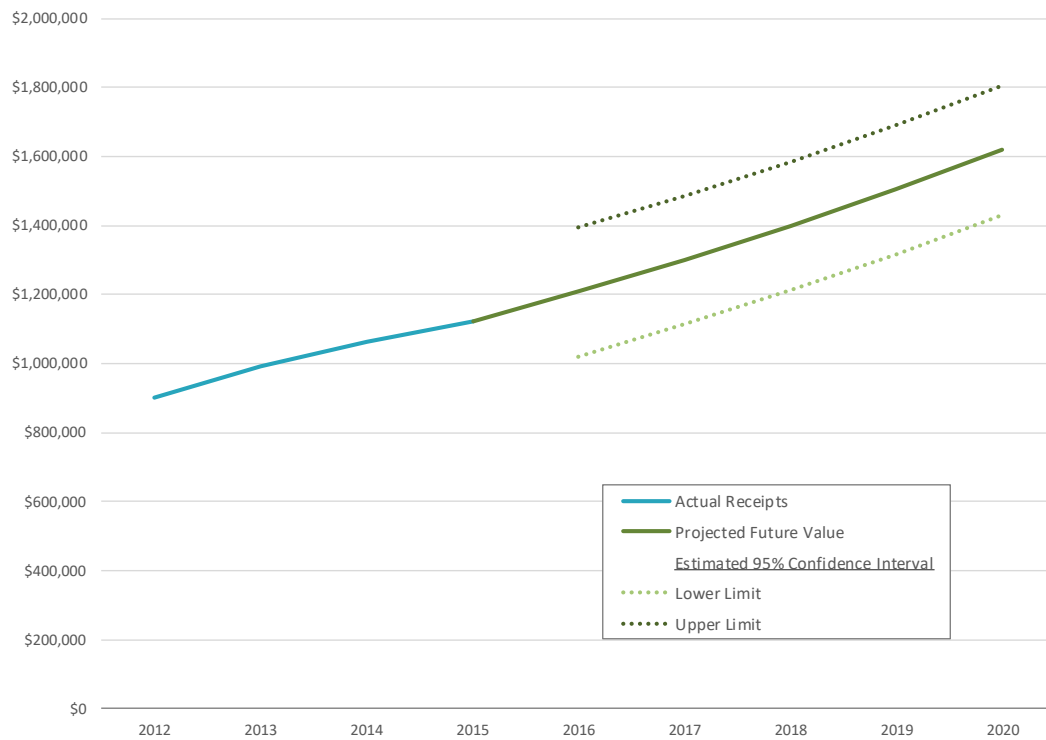
- TPA actual receipts from 2012-2015 had an average annual growth rate of 7.6%, generating on average \$1 million a year.
- On the high end of the range, TPA revenues are estimated to grow to approximately \$1.8 million by 2020.
- On the low end of the range, the fund may generate approximately \$1.4 million in 2020.

Exhibit 21 – TPA Actual and Projected Revenue

	Actual				Projected				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Actual Receipts	\$902,053	\$991,915	\$1,063,345	\$1,122,735					
Projected Future Value					\$1,207,900	\$1,299,500	\$1,398,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,618,000
Upper Limit					\$1,394,300	\$1,485,900	\$1,584,400	\$1,690,400	\$1,804,400
Lower Limit					\$1,021,500	\$1,113,100	\$1,211,600	\$1,317,600	\$1,431,600
Annual Growth	NA	10.0%	7.2%	5.6%					
Average Annual Growth Rate	7.6%								
Standard Deviation	\$95,103								
Confidence Interval Range	1.96								

Source: BERK, 2016

Exhibit 22 – TPA Actual and Projected Revenue



Source: BERK, 2016

APPENDIX A: STRATEGY REVIEW CARDS

Implementation progress on all 26 Strategies in the 2010 Snohomish County Tourism Strategic Plan are summarized on the following pages. The Progress Notes and the Reflections section within the review card are based on feedback from the County and Tourism Bureau.

Task Status Legend

Complete	Task was started and completed. No more work is being done on the task.
Ongoing	Task is recurring/ongoing, perhaps completed or progress in years past and continuing.
In progress	Discreet tasks that have been started but are not finished.
Not started	Task not yet started.
Dropped	Task has not been advanced for specific reasons.

Note that for the 'Expenditures' numbers in the cards are best-guess estimates provided by the Tourism Bureau. It combines whole numbers for 2011-2015 and an estimate for the year 2016 of only STP funds that the Bureau invoiced the County for, although some strategies were accomplished through the use of both LTAC funds and STP funds. These numbers are not meant to be used for financial accounting, but to provide an estimate for comparison purposes.

Strategy 1: Repackage the Snohomish County brand into an accessible adventure destination.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau with oversight from Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$150,000, \$25,000 subsequent years	i. \$147,047

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Launch a multi-year brand initiative with an eye to the adventure theme.	Ongoing	Completed in 2013	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks associated with this Strategy (launch, graphics, website) were completed but the strategy of repackaging and repositioning the county into an accessible destination is an ongoing effort to be expanded and refined. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branding initiatives launched. Brand implementation is ongoing. Yearly Partner Cooperative Marketing Design implementation is from 2014-2016 is ongoing.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Establishing a basic brand was a significant accomplishment and had a positive impact overall. More work is needed to genuinely reveal the character and identity of the unique regions that make up the County's diverse assets.

Bureau: Positive

- The rebranding process was positive and provided a targeted approach for positioning the county as a visitor destination. The brand is continually refined depending on target market.

Strategy 2: Develop strong cross-promotional marketing to encourage visitors to experience anchor clusters, anchor attractions, sustaining clusters, and sustaining assets.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (all except Task i) Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task i)			
Planned Resources:		Expenditures:	
i. \$0		i. \$0	
ii. \$500/yr.		ii. \$0	
iii. \$0		iii. \$65,248	
iv. \$50,000		iv. \$12,203	
v. \$0		v. \$0	
vi. \$20,000		vi. \$0	
Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Establish clear points of contact.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural communities within the County now have visitor websites with contact information due to LTAC funding. These added online amenities have helped these smaller, local Destination Management/Marketing Organizations (DMOs) partner more effectively with businesses, visitors and the Bureau. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various staff members are assigned to different projects and visitor market segments. They are regularly in contact with stakeholders. Regular communications via electronic newsletters identify points of contact for different promotional opportunities. Community contacts include chambers, city economic development managers, elected officials, tourism business owners, community groups and associations.
ii. Share information between stakeholders.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This task is fundamental for collaboration on tourism development projects; action team organization; a needed industry education repository; and a place for grant applications and information. This should be a strategy with task provisions for development of dedicated industry portals for County, Bureau, DMOs and stakeholders. Bureau Distribution lists and contacts have been created but is continually changing and being updated as new organizations, businesses and personnel change.

iii. Familiarize tourism stakeholders with attractions and assets.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New roundtables started in 2015 effectively connected small businesses, non-profits and attractions, familiarizing them with the nature of each other's operations and challenges. • Outcomes included new collaborations with goals to connect tourism products to broader tourism network. <p>Bureau:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented Industry Education Month (2013 – present). Coupons and discounts for events and attractions and activities secured by SCTB staff and sent monthly to hotels and attractions. • Six online training videos for front-line staff created and accessible online. • Created Tourism Bingo (bingo game about cities and attractions in the county) and distributed to all hotels. • 2016 Rural Tourism Workshops for stakeholders. – See also Strategy 13.
iv. Develop a system of itineraries, maps, promotions, and packages that promote the diverse variety of assets.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile tours created, printed and posted online. • Tourism Revealed program was monthly scavenger hunt themed promotion highlighting “off the beaten track” activities and attractions Discontinued in 2015. • East County Back roads brochure created in 2016. • See also Strategy 2, Task vi.
v. Work with tour operators to expand existing tours.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need identified for a water trail in Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys was first identified by guides / outfitters. To expand existing rafting tours in a sustainable, organized way, guides, outfitters and others continue to collaborate with County on development of the Sky to Sound Water Trail, now in second year of development. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a sales function of the Bureau and is being implemented annually. We attend several trade shows and sales missions and communicate regularly with tour operators. Familiarization tours, itinerary development and support is provided to tour operators regularly. • See also Strategy 6, Task iii.

vi. Organize the Tourism Exploration Zones and outline Zone cross-promotions.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing networks of regional stakeholders rather than into four zones is recommended. Working with stakeholders in a regional framework gave them a grass-roots freedom to determine what to promote and how to support their own products. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 – 2015: Tourism Revealed program helped with promotion of hidden assets and lesser known attractions. Mini accordion brochures for "8Top 10..." topics produced in 2016. Paid out of LTAC. Journeys section of website has regional and topical itineraries. See also Strategy 15 Task i for expenditures.
<p>Reflections on Impact</p> <p>County: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition and development of multiple regional identities within the county will accomplish a host of marketing and stakeholder engagement tasks now listed separately within existing strategies. A revised strategy to develop and promote connected visitor experiences within authentic regions that involves local stakeholders should replace the rigid construct of organizing north, south, east, west county zones. <p>Bureau: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall positive. Maps, itineraries and promotions are ongoing and change periodically providing new ways to promote the assets. Task vi – there was a negative response by the communities to the exploration zone concept. A hard geographic border delineating the county was not well received. The bureau took a more geographic and thematic approach depending on the community and the tourism assets (agricultural assets as an example span multiple zones). The zone concept needs to be more fluid and regionally relevant. The zone tactic as defined was not effective in supporting the strategy. 			

Strategy 3: Develop the capacity to better promote hidden assets.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
Other Organizations: Snohomish County Parks and Recreation

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$20,000/yr. (\$5,000 per Zone)	i. \$4,000

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Host Zone branding workshops.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional "Trail Town" identity development is in early stages with stakeholders in rural valleys cities and towns. Once identities are established, branding can naturally follow to express the truth of the identities. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See also Strategy 2 iv, 2 vi, and 3 i. Addressed through the creation of additional mobile tours, website enhancements, tourism exploration maps and package promotion collateral as noted in the 2013 operational plan and budget. Sub-branding of river towns (NOT COMPLETED). Sub-branding needs additional resources and coordinated with SCTB brand guidelines.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Additional regional visitor identity development workshops are needed to engage stakeholders in planning process before branding workshops are held. Stakeholders need support to coordinate visitor product offerings and maximizing opportunities. The County and Bureau should collaborate with stakeholders on developing their own regional presence that both the regions and Bureau can promote.

Bureau: Neutral

- The zone concept needs to be more fluid and regionally relevant.
- Cooperative marketing and complementary sub-branding is a more effective approach.
- The zone tactic as defined was not effective in supporting the strategy. Different tactics were implemented. Organizations and communities have their own brand standards and were not interested (for the most part) in combining different branding with their own. There were noted exceptions who supported the branding including cities, territories and attractions.

Strategy 4: Have fun and engage people in surprising ways.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Task i)
Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task ii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$35,000	i. \$0
ii. \$0	ii. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Implement a pilot program around the ambassador idea.	Dropped	Dropped	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended for implementation. Came off as a cute idea, but was seen as detrimental to the plan. Difficult to implement and not enough capacity to execute.
ii. Sponsor “Art in Nature” and “Nature in Art” installations and events.	In progress	In progress	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder grant requests are responsive to these efforts, however, this is not pursued as a stand-alone county tourism development initiative. Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with hotels and arts organizations were encouraged. Schack Art Center now provides rotating artist exhibits at the Lynnwood Convention Center. The hotels, due to corporate standards and concerns of risk to the art, did not implement.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Neutral

- It is recommended that County tourism development remain focused on facilitating local communities with training to produce quality events that will be sustainable and appropriate to their targeted development priorities over time.

Bureau:

- This should be a function of the Arts Commission.

Strategy 5: Expand the convention and meeting booking function of the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task i, ii)
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Task iii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$30,000	i. \$69,925
ii. \$0	ii.
iii. \$0	

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Develop a business plan that addresses the meeting and event services of the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County and Bureau have worked to address needs for meeting and event services within approved business plans. Funding priorities of LTAC influence capacity for meeting and event services. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added staff in 2015 plan, but not sufficient funding to hire a sales staff member. Staff person has been on board since April 2015. STP funding supported the additional staff for partial year 2015 and full year 2016. Moved to LTAC funding for 2017. The bureau has a developed plan for meeting and event services within a sales capacity.
ii. Support efforts by local communities and facilities to address infrastructure gaps.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roundtables, workshops and meetings with stakeholders are effectively identifying and addressing infrastructure gaps for a host of issues including signage, meeting space and boutique lodging. Stakeholder- driven action teams are now formed and attempting to address various topics. Continuing county facilitation and support is needed.
iii. Facilitate the provision of better services provided by existing hotels.	Not started	Not started	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate lodging establishments do not readily engage with external stakeholders to address service improvements. Tourism Promotion Area Coordinator regularly attends SCLA to look for opportunities to promote grants that will increase overnights. <p>Bureau</p>

- Not yet approved by SCLA Leadership. Recommendations were made but not implemented. This is a business decision by each hotel and not the function of the county.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Outcomes for Task ii were seen in the Rural Tourism Workshops and demonstrated the work the County, Bureau and communities can accomplish together to address challenges. Supporting efforts by local stakeholders to address their own tourism infrastructure gaps is a crucial activity for a highly functioning County tourism system.
- Task iii: Corporate hotels strive to provide quality lodging experiences within their brands, but corporate business models limit hotel staff engaging with broader tourism development activities. Organizations like the Snohomish County Lodging Association (SCLA) provide a positive and forum for tourism stakeholders to communicate with local hotel industry where each can share development updates about relevant activities.

Bureau: Positive

- 5i: Resources for additional sales staff for the meetings and event services are necessary to bring additional business to the county. A positive effect is seen with ROI of direct sales efforts.
- 5 ii: Infrastructure gaps are a matter of feasibility studies and investment by private business.
- 5 iii: Encouragement is provided but this is a matter for private business and driven by competitive positioning; not measurable and not a function of the County.

Strategy 6: Strengthen the aviation cluster and knit it to the broader network of tourism assets.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task i, ii)
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Task iii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$25,000	i. \$0
ii. \$50,000	ii. \$0
iii. \$50,000	iii. \$34,177

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Facilitate the development of a stronger and better coordinated aviation cluster.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff revived the Aviation Attraction Roundtables in 2015. Members meet monthly in the off and shoulder seasons strengthening planning and awareness and connections with external stakeholders. • Attractions are working to revise the Aviation Passport concept with local hotels. • Phase 1: Paine Field Aviation Attraction Wayfinding Project Concept Design and Implementation Plan underway in 2017. Visitor wayfinding identified as a key visitor service weakness. Design concept will consider visitor needs and activities; length of stay and affinity development for return visits Steering committee composed of attraction leaders, Airport staff, Bureau and other key stakeholders. <p>Bureau:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of all aviation attractions is available at Paine Field. • Annual brochure insert for aviation events distributed at all aviation attractions. Paid out LTAC funds.
ii. Support the continued strengthening of the Future of Flight Aviation Center.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supports initiatives of new leadership at F of F and strives to connect and include the facility with boarder network of assets in the County. <p>Bureau:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013 - New Visitor Information Center at Future of Flight.

<p>iii. Encourage tour operators and individuals visiting the aviation cluster to take in more of Snohomish County.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a sales function of the Bureau and is being implemented annually. We attend several trade shows and sales missions and communicate regularly with tour operators. • 2013 - New Visitor Information Center at Future of Flight. • 2014-2015 – hotel key card/sleeve/insert program for Tourism Revealed promotion. Discontinued in 2015. • I-pads at 3 VIC locations including Future of Flight to provided information to visitors about other county attractions. • Future of Flight ticketing auto-responder messaging employed for 2 years. Discontinued in 2017. • See also Strategy 6.i. and 2.v.
<p>Reflections on Impact:</p> <p>County: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The smaller aviation attractions are not as well-known locally by smaller tourism assets dispersed throughout County. The attractions themselves do not have bandwidth for outreach to attractions beyond their immediate neighbors. As rural tourism develops and evolves, DMOs from different regions where outdoor adventure recreation is primary driver, will connect with attractions and cross-promote more effectively. More stakeholder engagement and coordination work is needed. <p>Bureau: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 iii: This is a sales function of the bureau and is being implemented annually. We attend several trade shows and sales missions and communicate regularly with tour operators providing itineraries and support. 			

Strategy 7: Build on the County's strengths in tribal gaming.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

i. \$0

i. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Link tribal casino visitors with other tourism attractions in the County.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation started in 2015. • Continue positive relationships and partnerships with the tribes, particularly with the hotels, Hibulb Cultural Center and the shopping/retail establishments on tribal land, not casinos specifically. Casinos are interested in keeping their guests onsite. • See also Strategy 6 iii

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

There are many meaningful collaborations to develop with all Tribal partners in a host of ways to extend far beyond gaming visitors. Deepening engagement and collaboration remains a high priority and should not be limited to gaming.

Bureau: Positive

Strategy 8: Leverage the County’s considerable outdoor recreation assets.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$0	i. \$0
ii. \$0	ii. \$57,868
iii. \$0	iii. \$4,240
iv. \$0	iv. \$0
v. see Strategy 13	v. \$0
vi. \$0	vi. \$0
vii. \$0	vii. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Generate maps that highlight outdoor assets.	Complete	Complete	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015: Engagement with stakeholders in the Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys gave rise to the Bureau’s East County Back roads map. The new map helps visitors find alternate routes to explore. • An online Sky to Sound Water Trail Map describing the character of the three river reaches and trail town amenities along the route is in development with multiple partners. Map will be linked to Snohomish.org; area DMO websites and various and other recreation websites in future. *ESRI user interface will help land mangers coordinate development on water trail. • Town of Darrington has developed new hard copy and online maps of outdoor trails and scenic viewpoints funded by LTAC. • Darrington Archery Range has new range map to support international tournaments. • City of Arlington has new regional online and hard copy asset map with mapping product provided by County Parks. • Town of Index has new kiosk with map to help visitors find walking trails. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015: East County Back roads map created. • 2015: Updated and printed new hiking guide. • 2016 new Outdoor Adventure Guide created.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016: Top 10 attractions guides. Paid out of LTAC funds. • Each year the bureau creates and updates guides and online resources.
ii. Develop a series of itineraries that feature small town outdoor adventures.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016: Bureau and County conducted 14, day-long Rural Tourism Development Workshops in Stillaguamish Valley and Sky Valley communities. Itineraries were drafted by attendees to help communities evaluate needed service linkages between assets. • 2016: The Darrington Summer Meltdown Festival received funding from the TPA for an Adventure Village at the four-day festival. Local guides took attendees on trips from festival to discover area. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013: Created mobile tours. See also strategy 2iv • 2015: Created East County Back roads map. See Strategy 2 iv • 2016: Conducted rural tourism workshop series in Stillaguamish Valley and Sky Valley communities • 2016: Itineraries on website, outdoor adventure guide. Paid out of LTAC funds. • Journey's section of website added in 2016. See Strategy 15 i.
iii. Develop wildlife viewing itineraries.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in outdoor adventure trade shows in past years. • 2016: Participation in Adventure Travel Trade show in Vancouver, BC. • Parks by Nature app advertising • Included in Outdoor adventure guide in 2016 • Included in Top 10 guides in 2016
iv. Develop water activity adventure itineraries.	In progress	In progress	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park Service (NPS) planning grant awarded 2016-17 for development of Sky to Sound Water Trail with additional focus on Skykomish-Snohomish Trail Town development initiatives. The water trail adventure experiences along the 84-miles route where visitors can plan camping, fishing and boating itineraries.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sky to Sound Water Trail coalition of 28 organizations meet monthly with sub-committees on water trail development to improve experiences for recreationists in sustainable ways. • Water trail inventory of access, capacity, improvements and needed amenities drafted for concept plan to aid with funding for these improvements. • The coalition is considering pursuing a national designation for the water trail. • A 2.5-day design charrette is planned for June 2017 to design access, signage, camping and connectivity to the river access points in the City of Sultan to provide a Trail Town case study through the NPS.
v. Post outdoor activity - related links on the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau website.	Ongoing	Complete/ Ongoing	<p>County</p> <p>Efforts are ongoing to increase website connectivity between tourism assets and organizations.</p> <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed and updated regularly. Paid out of LTAC funds.
vi. Develop more biking options.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013: Produced Centennial Trail brochure and trail markers. • North Mountain Skills Park under construction in Darrington, staff facilitating stakeholder engagement to support DNR and Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance on project. • Whitehorse Trail under development with planned completion in 2017. Once complete, Darrington and Arlington will assume identities as Valley Trail Towns along the Centennial and Whitehorse. • Parks Department is working on the Lord Hill Park BMX Bike Course – this major project will provide a large and iconic course more significant than North Mountain. • Staff worked with Arlington Chamber to increase collaborative partnership with the Cascade Bicycle Club to promote Arlington as hub Trail Town for cyclists <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and distribution of Community Transit biking map and Centennial Trail maps.

vii. Address user conflicts and access issues.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Recreation Roundtables started in 2015 forming partnerships between user groups: Back County Horsemen; Cascade Bike Club; Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance; Snohomish BIKES Club and the Centennial Trail Coalition. • Sky to Sound Water Trail Coalition is working with various stakeholders including Tribes, law enforcement; public agencies and users to solve user and access issues. • Efforts include discussions with Burlington Northern Railroad. • Sky to Sound water trail is addressing some of these issues with landowners. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Sultan and Sky Valley Chamber hold regular meetings with federal, state and county land owners. Snohomish County Parks and the Bureau attend regularly.
<p>Reflections on Impact:</p> <p>County: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County has gained new partners since the beginning of the STP that have been impactful resources for outdoor recreation, eco-, agri- and bike tourism planning and advocacy. Organizations now supporting and advocating for Snohomish County Tourism development include REI, Forterra, the Cascade Bike Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Washington Water Trails Assoc., Washington Trails Alliance, the Wilderness Society and others. • New roundtables, rural tourism development workshops, water trail planning brought recreation and conservation orgs into tourism development efforts with County tourism interests. These organizations lend expertise, advocacy and extensive connection to larger user group communities, promoting experiences in rural regions of the county. • Task vii. is a hallmark activity; it should be a principal or an overarching part of a Goal. <p>Bureau: Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been a giant pillar in the plan. The County's Strategic Tourism Plan staff did a lot of great work under this strategy that the Bureau can promote 			

Strategy 9: Promote and support the County's diverse shopping options.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$0	i. \$0 (noted in other strategy sections)
ii. \$50,000/yr.	ii. \$41,063

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Develop a suite of shopping itineraries.	Ongoing	Complete/ Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed and ongoing. Also included in Journey's section of website, and mobile tours.
ii. Develop an annual shopping adventure promotion.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2012-2015: StayShopandSave (an advertising promotion directed to Vancouver BC area includes overnight stay discounts and shopping coupons), mobile tours and Tourism Revealed. StayShopandSave paid out of LTAC funds and by participating partners. 2013-2015: Ads in kiosks at Seattle Premium Outlets and Alderwood mall. Ambient advertising with Snohomish County Yeti promotion at Seattle Premium Outlets funded for one year via STP funds. 2015-2016: Everett Mall ambient advertising.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

Visitor-related retail is an anchor component of a highly functioning tourism destination as visitors influence lodging, small and micro-businesses to locate in Snohomish County. These retail amenities supported by visitors in turn influence other segments of the economy, including workforce.

Bureau: Positive

- Advertising shopping to Canadian audiences is effective. Inclusion of shopping options on website and in visitors' guides is also appropriate. Continued advertising in malls to direct visitors to other attractions/activities is supported in other strategies, but resources need to be directed to this effort.

Strategy 10: Continue to build the County's organized sporting events market.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Task i)
Snohomish County Sports Commission (Task ii and iii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$0	i. \$0
ii. \$0	ii. \$9,740
iii. \$0	iii. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Support the Snohomish County Sports Commission concept.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accomplished through TPA support. Staff position added in 2015 and continued in 2016.
ii. Build support for the organized sports market.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade shows and travel to sports events planners. Paid by TPA funds and LTAC funds. The sports department funded partially by LTAC and partially by TPA is the primary tactic implemented and is essential to the growth of the economic development of Snohomish County. Both urban and rural communities benefit from the tracked ROI.
iii. Enhance the sports facility guide and promotional materials.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013: Trade show booth specific to sports. Paid by TPA funds. Collateral and advertising updated to meet new branding standards. Mostly paid by TPA funds; remaining by LTAC funds. Ongoing advertising continues. Mostly paid by TPA funds; remainder by LTAC funds. Additional support is needed to brand the county as a sports destination.

Reflections on Impact:

County: **Positive**

- The County sports program is earning excellent returns with year over year growth. Much of this is due to the level of engagement of Sports Commission staff provide stakeholders through in-person meetings, planning assistance, and network building.
- The impact and importance of sports marketing and development may warrant its own strategic plan to devise a detailed strategic funding plan implemented to support and ensure continued program growth.

Bureau: **Positive**

- Limited by TPA board for funding for this program. Additional financial support is required. TPA Board is not always supportive of programs proven to generate ROI. Guidance to that board is recommended. Stable, reliable funding is required.

Strategy 11: Promote adventure - focused day trip itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$50,000 annually	i. \$263,404

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Develop an advertising campaign focused on adventure day trips.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed in 2013, expanded in 2014 and ongoing through 2016.

Reflections on Impact:

County: **Positive**

- This strategy is similar to Strategy 12 and the two should be combined into tasks of a larger development approach.
- The new Journeys section of itineraries of the Snohomish.org, is an effective regional linking tool. The tool provides tourism assets a framework to connect offerings with other assets in a region according to seasonal needs. The tool provides an impactful story-telling narrative with an experiential voice to visitors who want to preview experiences available in the various regions of the county.

Strategy 12: Promote all itineraries, maps, packages, and promotions within target audience communities.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

i. \$0

i. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Develop an advertising campaign focused on adventure day trips. Conduct a press release, pitch, and media relations effort.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012 – 2016: Ongoing work • Media relations specialist contracted; brought in-house in 2016. Paid out of LTAC funds. • Advertising updated to new graphic standards and messaging. Paid out of LTAC funds • Identified and implemented targeted advertising to Seattle area and regional consumer market. See also Strategy 5 and 11 • 2013-2015: TV promotions for key activities in greater Seattle market. See also Strategy 8 and 11.

Reflections on Impact:

County:

- Both strategy 11 and 12 should be tasks of a larger marketing strategy.

Bureau: Positive

- Task i. should be divided into two different strategies. One on adventure promotion and a second on media relations.
- For the media relations, dedicated staff and resources needed to have greater impact. Tracking of media exposure is difficult, and expensive through other means.

Strategy 13: Take a collaborative approach to strengthening the County's sustaining tourism clusters.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division Task with support by Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations: Snohomish County Agriculture Coordinator (Task iv)

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$5,000	i. (noted in other strategies)
ii. \$0	ii. (noted in other strategies)
iii. \$30,000	iii. (noted in other strategies)
iv. \$0	iv. (noted in other strategies)
v. \$0	v. (noted in other strategies)
vi. \$0	vi. (noted in other strategies)

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Convene a heritage and cultural tourism summit.	Complete	Complete	Bureau/County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two full days devoted to Heritage and Culture at the Rural Tourism Development Workshop Series attended by leaders in these organizations in East and North County in 2016.
ii. Work with arts, culture, and heritage partners to develop and promote cluster activities.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County and bureau staff conduct regular rural roundtables, workshops and support action teams developing aspects of these activities. Expansion of efforts will include larger organizations to foster cross- connections, mentorships and form new partnerships in 2017. Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See i. above.
iii. Develop a historic sites partnership.	In progress	In progress	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The County Heritage Preservation Board is a long-standing entity. Additional connection and collaboration is needed to support and inform tourism development in the county.
iv. Help grow and promote the emerging food and agriculture cluster.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Red Rooster Route in the Stillaguamish River Valley is established and highly functioning with board, paid members, website, signage and map. Organizational membership to the Cascade Loop that promotes agricultural experiences of the County to international audiences.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LTAC provides funding for agriculturally-related events and featured for the Festival of Pumpkins <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Tourism Workshop Series (East and North County) 14 separate day-long sessions (2016). Advertising and branding inclusive of agricultural assets. Local liquid arts section added to website. Support provided for in other strategies including media outreach.
v. Work with local tribes to strengthen the indigenous experiences cluster.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New connections through roundtables and outreach are now developed with Sauk-Suiattle and Stillaguamish Tribes. For Sauk-Suiattle, important insights to the challenges including distance to other amenities are initially addressed by connecting Darrington visitor development efforts with Tribal efforts, and connecting both to larger regional framework. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Strategy 23. The tribes have their plan for development. We support their work and provide resources, leads and partner with them as possible. This, like the strategy to develop services at hotels, is a decision by the Tribes and not ours to direct.
vi. Collaborate with rural communities to enhance small town experiences.	Ongoing	Complete/ Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the Stillaguamish-Sauk River Valley(s) and Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys will work on regional development in 2017 to support the historic, cultural and economic connections to their shared geographical locations along regional trail systems. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Tourism Workshop Series (East and North County) 14 separate day-long sessions (2016).

Reflections on Impact:

County: **Positive**

- Strategy 13 is very broad and tasks ii, iii, iv, v, vi remain crucial investments in competitive tourism development for Snohomish County.
- With the exception of the Indigenous Cluster, each of these sustaining clusters tend to rely heavily on LTAC grant funding for brochures, websites events and more benefit the most from workshops and development support.
- It will be helpful to consider the needs (funding, and development) of these clusters in the context of their regions to align and connect resource investments accordingly.
- Rather than addressing the clusters by stand-alone type, it is recommended that the County provide an integrated and more programmatic approach to organize and support the clusters with other assets within their region and then support the region.

Strategy 14: Identify sustainable tourism opportunities.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Task i)
Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task ii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. See Strategy 13	i.
ii. \$10,000	ii.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Create a dedicated sustainability page on the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau website.	Dropped	Dropped	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green or eco-friendly offerings included in Meeting and Event Facilities Guide. Sustainability (green practices) is widely defined and not consistent. No specific definition or strategy developed to implement this.
ii. Develop a sustainable asset inventory.	Complete		County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable features of some varied attractions are notable (green built structures – rain gardens, etc.) and are inventoried by the County Office of Sustainability. These sites and features reflect the overall sustainable methodology of the County and are appealing but don't rise to the level of a tourism focus.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Neutral

- Visitors now expect sustainable practices to be used as much as possible at home as well as at destinations. The more relevant definition of sustainability in the visitor context is how authentically beneficial a tourism activity into the community where the activity occurs. All County tourism development should aspire to be developed sustainably. Sharing stories about efforts to develop tourism sustainably, can attract visitors, making them feel good about visiting Snohomish County.

Bureau: Neutral

- This is part of a wider initiative of branding the county as an outdoor recreation area that values and protects the environment; not a page on a website.

Strategy 15: Improve the tourism information delivery system.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:

- i. \$150,000, plus \$25,000/yr.
- ii. \$0

Expenditures:

- i. \$193,890
- ii. \$0 (included in above or paid out of LTAC)

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Improve the Tourism Bureau website.	Complete	Complete	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created an entirely new branded website and platform in 2013 with additional features and functionality. Ongoing improvements are made annually including Journeys section, online hotel booking function, filter and sorting enhancements, photography options, complementary interest offerings, etc.
ii. Enable visitors to create custom itineraries based on interest, time, or geographic focus.	Ongoing	Complete (with an addition in progress)	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed in web design; itinerary function. Added Journeys section, storytelling features added in 2016.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- The branded Snohomish.org platform was favorably reviewed by recent user polls. Continued development of the County online presence will require additional investments. Next steps should be considered holistically, and not limited to a single website. Rather, a broader analysis of comparable destination investments should be considered and weighted against the overall destination development goals for Snohomish County.

Bureau: Positive

- The website was widely supported. Additional improvements have been made annually. Given our resources, it is functional and inclusive and improved annually. Creative design is a matter of opinion.

Strategy 16: Update approach to putting information in visitors' hands.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$45,000	i. \$7,482
ii. \$95,000	ii. \$ 2,289
iii. \$30,000	iii. \$10,000

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Evaluate options to improve Visitor Information Centers.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Visitor Information Center (VIC) program for festivals; advertising at Seattle Premium Outlets; discussion with Tulalip Resort Casino for enhanced concierge support. • 2013 - Signage at Future of Flight Visitor Information Center (VIC). Tablet added at location for online searches. • 2014 - banners/signage at VICs and digital VIC information placed strategically outside. • 2014-15 - electronic kiosks added at Lynnwood Convention Center and Tulalip Resort.
ii. Create a new, comprehensive Snohomish County Visitor Guide	Ongoing	Complete	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised guide to a semi-annual (spring/summer and fall/winter) to allow for seasonal events and focus. Added articles by travel writers utilizing an itinerary focus. Ongoing. Mostly paid out of LTAC.
iii. Ensure the County is using the most effective smartphone technology.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016 - Enhanced geotargeting via SpotExchange online/mobile ads/search. • Annual online advertising via a variety of platforms • Expanded social media program • See also Strategies 2 iv, 11, 12.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Visitor centers continue to be an important element to many visitors. The VIC program accomplishes quite a lot with all volunteer staffing and familiarization tours throughout the County.
- It is important to support local chambers, who increasingly are assuming roles as Designated Marketing Organizations (DMO) for their communities. To leverage resources the County can support DMO training to support DMO marketing and development, to ensure local DMO efforts are aligned and actively engaged in the broader County efforts with the Bureau.

Bureau: Positive

- The tourism bureau VIC program has evolved, moved locations and is now incorporating partner training in 2017 to help hotel and attraction personnel (front line staff) become knowledgeable tourism ambassadors of the county as a whole. Though declining visitation to brick and mortar VICs, they still have a role and place for visitors to get information. They are the welcoming face of the County.
- Nationally, VICs are most effective when in downtown convention centers (i.e. Vancouver BC). We don't have similar infrastructure or funding mechanism to create that.

Strategy 17: Improve wayfinding and support the serendipity of discovery.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

- i. \$0
- ii. \$250,000?
- iii. \$0
- iv. \$40,000 per year

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Improve existing directions and contact information.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSDOT design and installation of 18 major new highway recreation and guide signs completed on SR 530. • USFS installed Suiattle River Recreation Area signs on SR 530 North to complete the signage package in Skagit County. • USFS / County - New Mountain Loop Highway (MLH) – 50 new USFS-designed logos and USFS standard trailhead signs. County installed. • County-controlled guide signs on MLH – distance to Darrington on Granite Falls installed. • Backman County Park sign package installed according to County standards for recreational facilities. • Darrington Municipal Wayfinding system completed and installed. • USFS paid for signage package for the Suiattle River Recreation Area to partner with County in signing the Darrington Recreation area.
ii. Develop a coordinated and themed signage approach.	Not started	Not started	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County does not control most major right of ways. There are many right-of-way agencies

			<p>(city, town, WSDOT) each with rigid standards, rules and regulations. Local municipalities must advocate for their own signage needs with the County supporting.</p> <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to specify design approach to incorporate existing tourism branding.
iii. Seek to make the guidelines for signage on State highways more supportive of promoting local tourism attractions.	In progress	In progress	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The County can work with WSDOT to ensure the agency provides signage according to its policies and guidelines – but signage installation priorities are often driven by budget and agency bandwidth. WSDOT can be responsive to municipalities it controls a right-of-way with, however, the agency seeks to reduce signage and visual clutter and is typically reluctant to add more signage; strong cases must be made and supported by municipalities as part of their own programs.
iv. Support improvements in gateway community presence.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved funding for the Cities of Edmonds, Arlington, and Sultan for gateway signage through the LTAC.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Directional signage or wayfinding is consistently mentioned by all communities and stakeholder groups, as a needed visitor improvement. Various wayfinding elements have been produced and installed since the writing of the 2010 Plan to help visitors explore remote areas with positive results and to improve gateway presence. There remains much work to do.
- The County and municipally controlled right-of-ways, especially in rural areas, face a much simpler process, improving timelines for production and installation for signage.
- State controlled right-of-ways can be very difficult to establish new signage, even in circumstances that seem to be approved by WSDOT policy and standard guidelines.
- Additional discussion is needed to clarify the intent of Task ii within this strategy within the County leadership and LTAC. Some leaders interpret the intent as requiring funded signage to adhere to the County tourism brand standards, in all applications, especially municipal gateway signage. Others interpret “coordinated” or “themed” much more loosely. Others still may interpret having a professionally produced gateway at all, a sign of success.
- Overall, the request and need for signage will remain a priority for Snohomish County stakeholders. Whether it is to improve visitor exploration in a remote area; to announce the arrival in a community or visitor district; to guide visitors around a campus; to announce upcoming amenities along a regional byway, or to simply point to public access; signage infrastructure will remain an important visitor development priority for many years to come.

Bureau: Positive

- The tourism branding should be included in all signage and has not been in the past.
- Lack of coordination county-wide, which does not support a sense of place. Need a county approach to design standards.

Strategy 18: Improve public transportation options to enhance access to tourism assets.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

i. \$0

i.

Tasks

Status

Progress Notes

County

Bureau

i. Facilitate county-wide efforts to address infrastructure gaps, with particular focus on transportation.

Not
started

Not started

County

- Many regional needs are identified, but access to public transportation is a shared troubling issue for many areas of Snohomish County.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Neutral

- This strategy requires high-level executive influence, and many organizations are addressing this internally and externally in the County. Tourism interests can advocate, but at this time, there is limited ability to influence these circumstances. This strategy is very broad and not effectively impacted by existing resources.

Bureau: Neutral

- Federal funding is at risk when adapting public transportation for events. We don't have events (i.e. Seattle Seahawks games) that bring in the numbers necessary to make a business case for private transportation providers. Transportation that serves residents and commuters also aids visitors. Washington State, and Snohomish County, are woefully underdeveloped in that infrastructure.

Strategy 19: Support the broadening of the County's range of overnight options.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Lodging Association (Task i)
Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task ii)

Other Organizations: Municipalities

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$0	i.
ii. \$0	ii.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Facilitate dialogue on strengthening existing overnight accommodations.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique lodging options are needed in rural areas. Some progress is made by action teams to undertake efforts to secure alternate lodging options (Airbnb, and tiny cabins on wheels). Process is ongoing.
ii. Continue to recruit higher-end hotels.	Not started	Not started	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher-end lodging recruitment was not undertaken as an implementation activity by County in 2014, 2015, or 2016.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Several new corporate properties have opened in the County since 2010 with others in various stages of development. Tourism advocates have had little direct influence on the development process; rather these investments are driven by private industry interests. Feasibility studies in rural areas may be helpful in the future.

Bureau: Positive

- When a business case can be made, hotels are developed. The county could pay for feasibility studies of various types of accommodations to support the city's economic development manager's quest to increase lodging options.

Strategy 20: Strengthen the County's ability to coordinate tourism efforts and implement this Plan.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

- i. \$100,000 per year
- ii. \$10,000

i.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Create a full-time tourism position within Snohomish County.	Complete	Complete	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff hired in 2014. Temporary six-month staff hired for 2017, see notes below.
ii. Align the Snohomish County Tourism Board's efforts with this Plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County/Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed and ongoing.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- County STP implementation is managed by a single staff and requires extensive coordination of resources, new program development, public presentations and deep stakeholder engagement. Competing projects and deadlines in diverse geographical locations across the entire County are challenging for a single staff person.
- To support existing staff, the LTAC recommended the addition of temporary help. This help is added for the first half of 2017.
- Staff recommends a longer-term solution for additional full-time staffing to support sustainable and predictable tourism programming for product and service development delivery.

Bureau: Positive

- The Bureau's contract and scope of work includes elements of this plan each year. Monthly status reports and annual report with ROI is documented. This plan is not comprehensive of all the work of the tourism bureau but augments the services of the work of the bureau.
- Additional staff to support the work of the plan at the County was crucial and necessary to include in the updated plan. Without the support of the County, the work of the Bureau would have been more difficult if not impossible. The partnership between the County and the Bureau is impactful for both organizations. The added county staff position provided the "boots on the ground" and developed relationships in communities while working on other projects that the bureau was able to capitalize on. The roles and responsibilities of each are now complementary and cooperative.

Strategy 21: Use data to strengthen tourism promotion and development efforts.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources:	Expenditures:
i. \$0	i.
ii. \$0	ii. \$9,000
iii. \$15,000	iii.
iv. \$75,000	iv.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Coordinate data collection.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research posted online in 2012 and updated annually. Added branding and STP research in 2014. Updated with Dean Runyan research annually. Paid out of LTAC funds. Included in Strategy 1.
ii. Create an easy-to-maintain repository of information.	Ongoing	Complete/Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed through the CRM program and updated regularly.
iii. Develop a “friends and family” team to collect visitor data.	Complete	Complete	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed prior to STP update in 2010. Paid out of LTAC funds. Not repeated. Difficult to coordinate and obtain good data. Need paid research. Request funding for full conversion study in future STP update.
iv. Maintain up-to-date market research insights.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed as part of the branding research. Annual tourism economic impact studies are purchased (statewide Dean Runyan Associates report). Monthly hotel occupancy/ADR/RevPar and demand and supply reports are purchased (STR). Possible 2017 research on conversion study via STP update.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Strategy 21 did not anticipate or account for product and service development needs within these tasks. There is need for developers to share and exchange extensive working information between County staff and external tourism stakeholders on development projects. To accommodate, the County has set up dozens of external Box.com folders providing various permissions and accounts to dozens of groups and teams, but this solution is temporary at best.
- It is recommended that some elements originally listed as such as Strategy 21 in the STP be transitioned into programmatic elements of a stabilized County tourism development program with operational infrastructure. Current tasks of Strategy 21 were largely configured for one-way interaction with the

Bureau to take visitor-ready information to post on their site, in their social media and in their newsletters. There was no mechanism for harboring, sharing, or hosting tourism product development work.

- A comprehensive evaluation of the County's online tools (websites and reservation systems) marketing investments and branding hierarchies, and data sharing capabilities be evaluated in the future and a SWOT analysis is recommended. Many large entities that are part of Snohomish County, including the Evergreen State Fairgrounds and Evergreen Speedway, Snohomish County Parks and Tourism Bureau have little connectivity between their sites. Each of these established, County-centric sites serve thousands of visitors separately every day. Bureau staff harvests information it can from these sites, but the other sites, which are forward-facing to visitors, are not connected to each other.

Bureau:

- Funding for conversion studies and professionally implemented visitor survey program is recommended.

Strategy 22 Broaden and enrich the conversation between the County and stakeholders.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

- i. \$0
- ii. \$0
- iii. \$0

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Hold regular stakeholder roundtables and encourage new stakeholders to join the dialogue.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Roundtables started by County in 2014 and ongoing. Started as a test, the format has been very successful and additional roundtables are requested in other subject areas in both urban and rural areas. • Strategic planning sessions, project discussion sessions and workshops with small businesses, guides, outfitters and tourism stakeholders, elected officials, chamber and business association leaders had significant impact on local development connections and development.
ii. Develop a work plan to involve more stakeholders in tourism planning and development.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much work has been done around this task. County-led Sky to Sound Water Trail with National Park Service (NPS) specifically inspired by this item. Water Trail and other roundtables rely on external stakeholders as a foundational approach to County-driven tourism

			<p>development. Partnerships with REI, Washington Water Trails, Whatcom County Recreation, Big Tent, USFS, and DNR etc. are now solid fixtures of County tourism development efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs are identified for additional focus groups, roundtables and workshops in 2017 covering a wide array of planning and industry development priorities in both rural and urban areas. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snohomish County Tourism Bureau board members are from various industry sectors. Their input in marketing plans, budgets, and implementation is ongoing. Additional input is included with the addition of non-board members to the SCTB Marketing Committee.
iii. Share and respond to stakeholder feedback.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roundtable format created a County culture of stakeholder collaboration and connectivity. Stakeholder positively to being part of the development process and request additional opportunities for development.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Development work including stakeholders outside the traditional tourism partner arena (hotels/attractions) greatly influenced the success of STP implementation. Since 2014, many newly involved stakeholders are regularly included and relied upon for guidance, planning resources, and information on asset/product planning and development.
- A wide array of community members, law enforcement, as well as other traditionally “outside” agencies/organizations with large membership bases (not based in Snohomish Co.) now lend resources, information and support to inform County tourism infrastructure planning efforts. Effective partnerships and collaborations specifically outdoor adventure recreation planning done by County staff have captured the attention of various organizations. Staff is frequently requested to give presentations on the County’s inclusive approach to tourism development and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

Bureau: Positive

- The roundtables and stakeholder groups and resulting task force committees from the Rural Tourism Workshops have been instrumental in communication between and among all entities. This work has fostered positive relationships between the county and the community groups and individuals. A new culture of inclusion and engagement as begun. The STP update must include the requests and vision of the Rural Tourism Workshops.

Strategy 23: Build stronger partnerships with the tribes to enhance and encourage indigenous tourism experiences.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

i. \$0

i.

ii. \$0

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Support better, two-way dialogue and collaboration.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small sessions, workshops, action teams and strategic planning meetings are now hall marks of County tourism development efforts. Staff work includes regularly facilitating two-way conversations with the County, Bureau and between stakeholders themselves. • Sauk-Suiattle Tribe is anchor member of North County outdoor recreation roundtable, and have hosted County roundtables with over 50 guests in Tribal Long House. • Stillaguamish Tribal staff participate and host outdoor recreation roundtables at the Cultural Resources Building.
ii. Promote tribal art and tourism related to indigenous experiences.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County and Tulalip Tribes are in preliminary discussions about on the water trail in the Skykomish-Snohomish River Valleys. The County hopes to support long-term investments that highlight heritage, restoration and conservation work on heritage lands in the Valleys. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created new arts and cultural guide in 2014 including tribal art. • SCTB marketing plan includes support and marketing of the Hibulb Cultural Center and Resort staff to highlight tribal tourism opportunities. • SCTB staff work closely with Tulalip, Hibulb Cultural Center and Resort staff to highlight tribal tourism opportunities.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- Building a wider variety of connections to collaborate with Tribal partners is an important next step for many aspects of sustainable tourism development in the County. Because so much outdoor recreation occurs on traditional heritage lands, tourism connections can't rely on the traditional attraction-related connections that exist now.
- Much larger discussions on difficult issues like habitat restoration and conservation efforts are now intersecting and overlapping with outdoor recreation planning in tourism in the river valleys. Planning for long-term environmental impacts is already underway with other County departments. To approach, likewise, sustainable tourism development should be informed by these complex considerations in its tourism planning for outdoor recreation.

Bureau: Positive

- As the Tulalip Tribes develop their tourism and cultural assets, the bureau supports, collaborates and includes those assets in all marketing and sales efforts.

Strategy 24: Support professional development for the County's tourism workforce.

Lead Organization: Snohomish County Economic Development Division (Task i)
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau (Tasks ii & iii)

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

- i. \$0
- ii. \$10,000 per year
- iii. \$0

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Coordinate with the Snohomish County Workforce Development's <i>Blueprint 2020</i> .	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with Workforce on rural initiatives for Stillaguamish River Valley economic recovery process undertaken in 2014.
ii. Provide targeted professional development opportunities.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing quarterly programs have been conducted. • Targeted trainings and electronic newsletter for hotels and their staff. Paid out of LTAC funds. • Conducted rural tourism workshops in 2016. • See Strategy 2iii and Strategy 13. • 2017 VIC program includes onsite hotel training.
iii. Contact new tourism-related businesses.	Ongoing	Ongoing	County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a hallmark of business development and should be continued. Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed and ongoing.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- This strategy could be expanded to include outreach to businesses interested in public/private partnerships. There are many opportunities to connect small businesses with the County to support visitors, trail hosts, camp hosts, guide services, etc.
- To take on workforce is a broad and less targeted effort. Tourism-related jobs are not generally favored by small communities, as they are perceived to be non-family wage jobs. Small business recruitment is understood to produce local jobs and needed service. This strategy could be re-worked to better align with needs of tourism development that serves local communities by improving quality of life.

Bureau: Positive

- January 2017 meeting between WSU Hospitality program, Workforce Snohomish County and SCTB scheduled. Cooperative training programs being explored.

Strategy 25: Leverage the lodging tax effectively to advance the tourism strategies.

Lead Organization: Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

Other Organizations:

Planned Resources: **Expenditures:**

- i. \$0
- ii. \$0
- iii. \$0

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Modify the requirements and evaluation criteria used to make Small Fund awards.	Complete	Complete	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Small Fund (LTAC) grant application was revised and now asks for explanation of how the project will help implement the STP. <p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional strategic conversation needs to take place to align scope, ROI and measurement thereof.
ii. Promote funding accessibility.	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility of the LTAC application for Large and Small Funds could be improved. Currently they are only available on the county website for a short period of time. The County Parks Department held a workshop in 2016 to help applicants better understand the process.
iii. Formalize the process and criteria for making awards from the Large Fund.	Not complete	Not complete	<p>Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County code already exists as it relates to this task.

Reflections on Impact:

County: Positive

- While the grant application now asks for how applicant projects implement the STP, the existing STP is largely unknown to the applicants, so responses are broad and general. While some applicants realize there is an STP because they have to mention in their application, the true intent of the strategy is to better align funding resources with implementation initiatives. This remains largely unrealized. Moving forward, it is recommended be a key component in workshops for reasons that go beyond grants, and into development initiatives overall.
- It is suggested that criteria for Small Fund grants should be re-examined and considered specifically in their regional ability to implement development efforts of the County Strategic Tourism Plan. Suggestions include breaking the applicant groups out into regions that have collectively organized to take on specific strategic efforts; (i.e., approve funding for a regional brochure, complimentary events designed to extend and build brand awareness). The goal being to incentivize and reward regions that

<p>work aggressively to connect their offerings, rather than operating separately within one competitive process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online portal for Small Fund applications should be developed. • Task i and ii should be integrated together and improved. <p>Bureau: Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2016, the County staff has begun to provide structure to the LTAC committee recommending minimum fund balance and policy for review of returning applicants. Additional strategic conversation needs to take place to align scope, ROI and measurement thereof.

Strategy 26: Support the emerging Tourism Promotion Area.			
Lead Organization:	Snohomish County Economic Development Division		
Other Organizations:			
Planned Resources:	Expenditures:		
i.	i.		
Tasks	Status		Progress Notes
	County	Bureau	
i. Facilitate the adoption of the Tourism Promotion Area.	Complete	Complete	<p>County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) was established and a full-time administrator was hired.
Reflections on Impact:			
County: Positive			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPA funds are relevant to the County's overall tourism development, and the Strategic Tourism Plan. Consideration and discussion about how to align efforts is recommended for future consideration. 			
Bureau: Positive			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPA funds have allowed Snohomish County to be more competitive with other destinations and brought in events that otherwise would not have selected our area. TPA funds have provided support to the growing Sports function at the SCTB. More funding is required to grow this segment. However, stable, reliable financial support for the sports program of the SCTB is crucial. • TPA Board training is needed. Additional strategic conversation needs to take place to align scope, ROI and measurement thereof. Consistent evaluation of applications and criteria needs development. 			